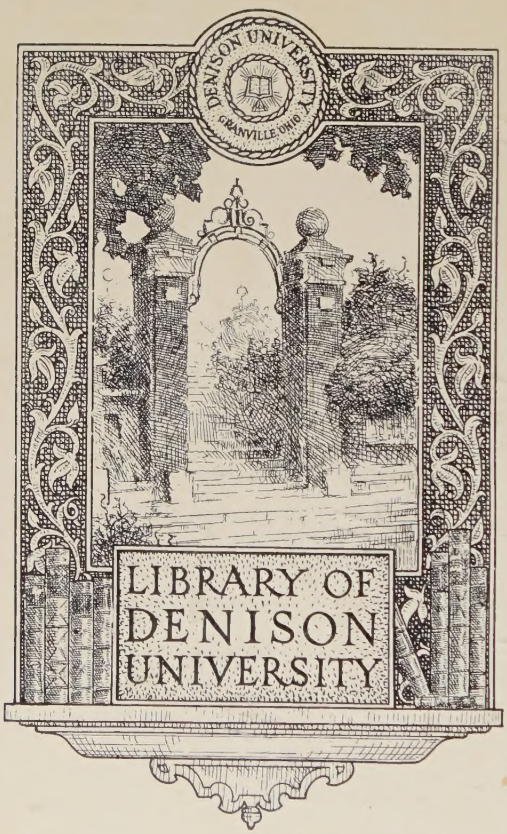
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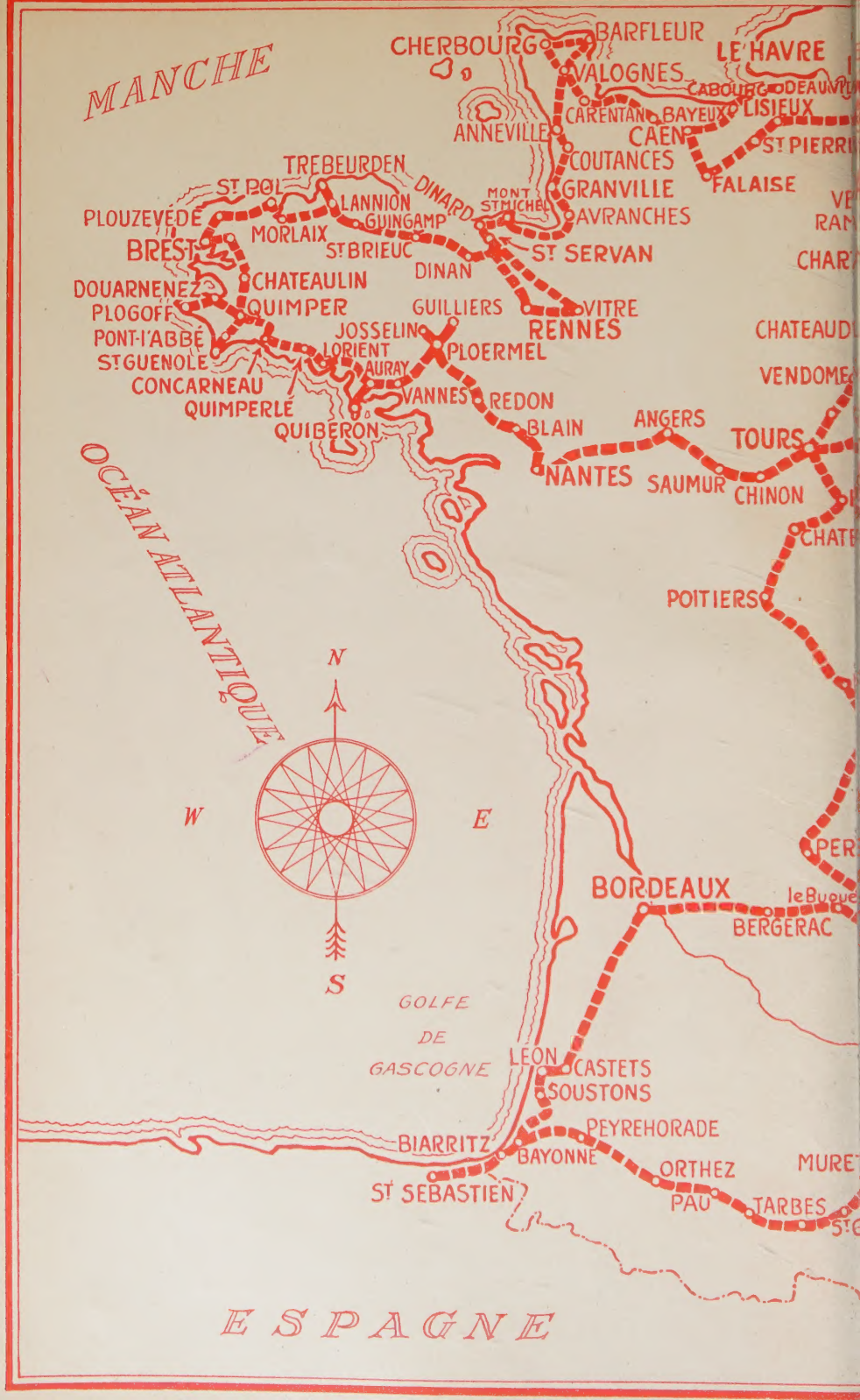
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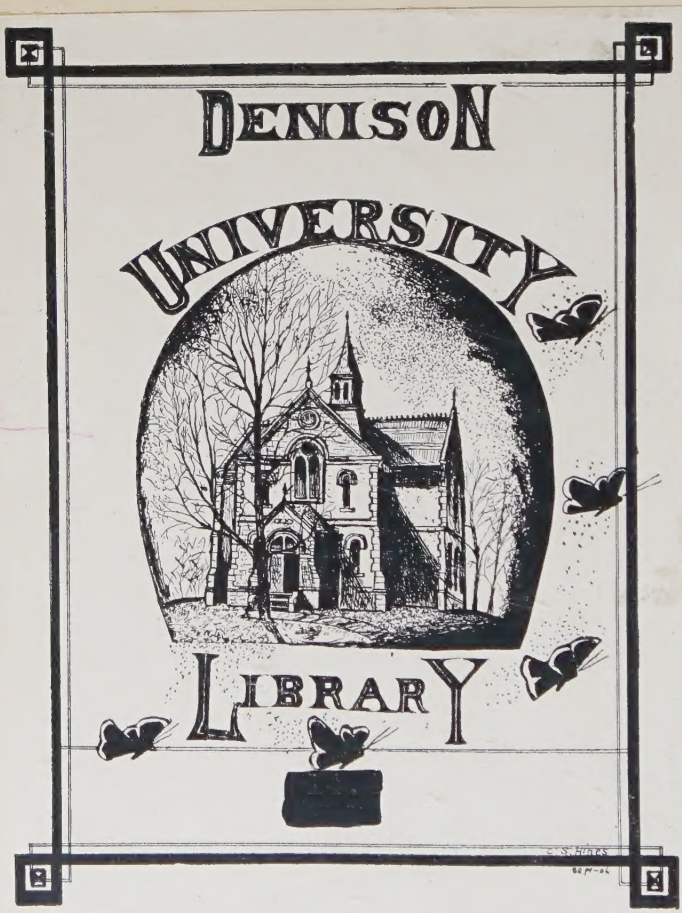
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TOURING THROUGH FRANCE

By

ELIZABETH SHACKLETON

Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

Decorations by EDWARD SHENTON

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1925

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Touring Through France

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A Brief Résumé of Expenses

	Francs	*Dollars*
Gasoline and oil - - - -	2264	113.00
Garaging - - - - - -	461	23.00
Insurance - - - - -	165	8.25
Quarterly Tax - - - - -	158	7.90
Repairs and Garage Tips - - -	2000	100.00
Small Town Hotels, per day - -	35	1.75
Fine Hotels in Cities, per day upward of	45	2.25
Very Simple Inns - - - -	25	1.25
Garage, when charged at all - -	4	.20
Transportation of Car, uncrated, each way		150.00

Exchange averaging 20 francs to one dollar.
By road map 5,328 kilometres, or 3,676 miles.
Actual route, 4,000 miles.

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Touring Through France

CHAPTER I

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

"THE car is yours? You have a little red ticket for it just as if it were a hat-box! I have it for you!"

We were in the Channel and would anchor before Cherbourg at dawn. The morning star shone in the port hole. The green-white dawn-light of October fell over the long wave-washed mole and the great hulls of black ships. The day was brightening—a gay air hung over the harbor—this was France! Up and enjoy it! The tender was whistling on the other side of the steamer. We drank our coffee and hurried up on deck and there was the car, already on the tender, being carefully covered with tarpaulin by blue-jerseyed sailors with "WELCOME" on their

chests in huge white letters. It looked personally propitious but was really the name of their boat.

Ant-like men carried mail sacks in long lines. French officials viewed and visaed and verified the passengers. At nine o'clock the boat-train left for Paris and the customs shed was empty.

"The car will be taken off the tender at eleven."

"Why not now?" we asked in cheerful mood, ready down to the very road maps! But there were formalities. A *triptych,* a membership voucher from the Touring Club of France, had to be shown, a *carte rouge* and a *carte gris* secured, the customs would require a deposit and then the essential *essence* being poured in, all would be ready to go. All had been discussed a month before with the French government agent at the *Bureau du Tourisme* in New York.

"We must wait for low tide. It will be down at eleven precisely."

On the broad, and now quiet quay, stood a little iron house high up on a frame. From this house projected a crane with a prodigious hook. It did not take a great mechanical bent of mind to see that the car was twenty feet above the highest possible position of the hook!

The customs men proffered their office for our bags and asked to what hotel we were going. In these few minutes a phrase of willing service, afterwards very familiar, was heard; they were doing

everything for *ces dames,* a profane-sounding phrase but simply for "the ladies"; they would store the bags, send to the hotel for us and help in every way they could.

Meanwhile the French Touring Club card had not arrived, but the French official of the *Bureau du Tourisme* telegraphed to Paris and had instructions to go with us to get cards of "capacity" and to assist at the customs.

At eleven we were summoned to the wharf. The car on the tender which had been high above the wharf was now far down. Smoke was coming out of the corrugated house. A busy man in black polished leather puttees, light blue jacket tightly buttoned, bright, yellow, puffy trousers, and a Napoleon III tuft on his chin, arrived, bowed to us and climbed up. There was a snuffling of the exhaust and the crane moved to the tender, reaching out its proffering hook.

Signs were made to the imperially whiskered man in his iron turret that we wanted to take a photograph of the car in the air. He stopped the engine and leaned out to say that if we would seat ourselves inside out of the wind, he would not fail to call us.

Twelve men in blue jerseys on the tender folded up the tarpaulin, disclosing the car with a curved pocket of metal under each wheel. Overhead two pieces of wood the size of small railroad ties spanned the car and prevented the steel cables from crushing

against the top. Loops from these ties awaited the hook from the crane.

Across the broad, grey graveled quay and the great stone-lined harbor basin, were the picturesque roofs of the old town. There was a sort of foreign quiet to it all. The famous wind of Cherbourg blew in our faces—our adventure in France had begun.

The hook slipped into place. The car rose, cleared the rail, came over the dock and hung in mid-air. The imperially ornamented chin came out the little window: "Is everything just as you wish it for the photograph?" How could he be told it had already been taken? I took another. He bowed as if he had been greatly obliged—and the car was on French soil.

Then the customs man came forward with a telegram to facilitate our entry. He suggested dejeuner, then going to the prefecture for *carte de capacite.* "Why not at once?" He smiled. "The prefecture closes two hours for dejeuner." He would put the car in the *douane,* the custom house, four blocks down the wharf. The offer to drive it was declined. No explosives could enter the *douane.* So twelve men pushed the car away, along the diminishing perspective of the quay and through a great stone portal. Luncheon was ingloriously eaten.

Promptly and before the prefecture was open, we went up the narrow cobblestoned streets of the old port across the basin. The prefecture was on a

courtyard bowered in roses, wall-climbing fuchsias and a white and showery-blossoming vine. As members of the French Touring Club, American registration card and driving license were to be exchanged upon payment of the necessary fee, for the *carte gris* and a *carte rouge* without which no car lawfully moves in France.

A young, black-clad man sat behind a large leather-covered table. The wall behind him was hidden by fat-bodied, yellow-leather law books. A girl in a dismal black pinafore tapped an American-made typewriter at a window looking out upon the flowers.

Birthplaces and parents' names and places of their birth were written down, signed for and countersigned. The official asked for four photographs. Two remaining from passports were offered but he wanted more. Off we went to a photographer who promised a handful by next day at noon and the intervening time was spent getting insurance papers, and dining on a terrace by the sea. Next day the official clipped and pasted our photographs on papers, one set for him to keep, one for the police, and the third for us. We began to feel elated. Perhaps the car would be free this second afternoon. He seemed to be nearing the end of his report. Respectfully, our hope was kept from his ears.

"The horsepower?" The figures were on the American registration card. "Ah—but the French

horsepower is not the same." Perhaps he could calculate it from ours, we suggested. That could not be done.

"But who is going to say? Could you tell by looking at the motor?"

"No." He knew nothing of mechanics. We must go to the revenue office for the horsepower. As this was at the other end of the town, the steamship office and hotel in between, and the car locked up, a cab was taken for the rest of the afternoon. The papers could not be given until this was known, for the French tax for traveling on the road, payable quarterly, depends on the horsepower.

Now, where was the next place to go? Fortunately the car was, legally speaking, in the possession of the steamship company and the baggage-master of the Cherbourg office offered to go with us to the man who should receive the tax. Most of the public buildings in France are palatial but this tax office was a little stone house across a muddy yard, up a mean wooden stair. We found a large ruddy-faced, south-of-France man with burry r's and much courtesy. Thousands of cigar boxes stood on floor and shelves. Five clerks were scratching in their ledgers with their long, lean French pens. For one hundred and fifty-eight francs, France was ours to go where we would for three months; after that time the tax would be again due.

Every paper necessary to travel was now ready

Landing in Cherbourg

The Fuschia-bowered Château of Tocqueville

The Harbor of Barfleur

Normandy and a Norman

but the car was still locked up. Accompanied by the steamship man, the agent of the *Bureau du Tourisme* and a boy with a can of *essence,* we went to the tall gate through which the car had been pushed the first day. The afternoon was dulling to another twilight. In very small quarters, sat four men.

The baggage-master presented all the papers. Our New York information was that a deposit of 50% ad valorem is asked; others had said 220%, to be refunded on reëmbarkation. Friendly advice, often given was, "say nothing and wait and see what they say." We waited. The men copied and registered and stamped and filed. They gravely asked if it was fully understood that the car must be taken out of France finally, and the quarterly tax paid. Stillness fell again. The two men with us shifted on their feet. In the cold room all looked somewhat frost-bitten. Everybody waited to see what would be said, but they were the only non-loquacious Frenchmen encountered in France.

Suddenly the chief's mental processes seemed complete. He rose with a cheerful smile:

"You are free to go at any time." With thanks and a great clicking of heels and bows and farewells we made an escape into the yard followed by a man with a key large enough to open the Bastille of old.

The great key opened a dog-kennel shaped door

and there was the car, hidden among tons of mouse-nibbled, unbound books. Porters pushed it up-grade into the yard. In went water and the contents of the *essence* can and at dark on the second day the switch was turned. After all the voyage, the stowing and storming, hoisting and craning, would the motor run? It buzzed at the first touch on the starter, and with lights on, we drove to the garage, in the gravel-pathed garden of the hotel.

What a good send-off there was that October morning! Another steamer had come in late at night. At the garden steps was our equipment, all so carefully planned and measured as to size and place; and also the guests of the hotel and the servants to see us off! The bell-boys put the bags, the camera and all the things in where they shouldn't go. But we kept working. Books were stowed under the seat; two bags each storm-covered in waterproof were placed each in a little cage on the running boards, thus maintaining an even balance of weight. The camera was hung at hand on the door. Umbrellas were slipped into loops below the front edge of the seat; guide books and reference books and road maps found places in strap sockets above and behind our shoulders. At the back of the car, in what a Frenchman calls the *coffer,* were the tools, the never-to-be-used chains, two bags of clothes not needed every night, and a supply of inner tubes. Down went the lid and all was ready! The small

bell-boys in brass buttons jumped for joy. Everybody on the steps wished they had thought to bring a car and they cheered us as we left.

Out at last, with the road across Normandy to Barfleur before us. A sudden Cherbourg gale blew. A small boy holding a hen was having a terrible time; and so was the hen. The empty *bidens,* or five-litre cans, were blown away down the road. It made the shelter of a closed car appreciated.

The road to Barfleur was marked on the road map, G. C. 10, meaning *Grand Chemin,* or highway, number 10. Once out of the town G. C. 10 became much more than a mere number on the map. We found this designation corresponded to whitened stones regularly recurring every kilometre, set a foot above the grass, never obscured by bush or tree, with G. C. 10 on their faces and on the side St. P. E. 35, then St. P. E. 34, diminishing as we approached St. Pierre Eglise, the next good-sized town. Looking backward, the other side told the increasing number of kilometres to Cherbourg. A road can easily be lost in a town or village, in turns through *places,* around churches or town halls, but map in hand, and an eye on the posts, a French highway is hard to lose in the open country.

"Keep to the right" is the French road rule, the same as the American. The road was broad and good, deeply ditched on the side, not in the best repair but all hard stone and easy to drive. All the

roadsides were shorn and neat and between ditch and fields was an earth bank like a wall, a disciplined landscape, continuing for miles. No one seemed to be traveling our way but going to Cherbourg there passed an old woman sitting six feet aloft in a two-wheeled, uncovered market cart drawn by a little donkey whose ears were nearly as long as its legs. The woman was brisk and busy and happy and had on her head, firm and neat, unmoved by the abating gale, a white coif with twelve even white loops reaching over her head from ear to ear. The reins from her hands reached down a long deep slant to the little beast's head and should any danger have approached, both she and the reins were strong enough to have lifted him out of the way. We encountered more carts and caps and some men and young girls all traveling toward the town we had left. Our road climbed a long hill to the uplands with broad far views over the pastures and fields. There were pollarded trees in the hedgerows, ivy covered in deep glossy green, with the twigs mossy and fuzzy from the dampness of the climate. As the road went up and down the slopes of these Normandy hills, every field was a delight. There were groups of old stone cottages in the hollows by the streams, brown and mossy as the earth itself, some with turtle-back stone ovens behind their chimneys, some with stacks of fagots at their doors and some with flowers.

The Journey Begins

It was a seafaring morning, this first one, a capful of wind and spatters of rain and then the sun. On the left we came to a great entrance and a long-vistaed, green avenue of mossy, ancient beech trees. Three parallel rows of full grown trees were on either side of the avenue carrying the eye back to the tightly closed, severely classic, silvery stone château of St. Pierre Eglise, at the end. It seemed to speak of contrasts of living, of "red heels here and red bonnets there"—the cowering, brookside cottages of one room, and the hundred-windowed château of courtier days before the Revolution.

A glimpse of the blue open sea showed to the eastward for we were driving to the northeast point of the peninsula of the Cotentin. There came in sight the village of Tocqueville with a single-arched stone bridge, under whose level three little houses all covered with mustard-yellow lichens, formed, with an old mill, a very pictorial group. On the rise stood a bare parish church dominating a few houses with dooryards of flowers. A cheerful-faced peasant woman, purple-cheeked, black-haired, tightly-stayed, in sabots, watched us from under the roses at her door.

The world used to find the political economy of de Tocqueville fascinating. *De* means a place of origin, so we asked if the house where M. de Tocqueville had lived was near. "The château? First road to the right." Turning into a great, grazed

park, green beyond belief, we came to a waterview before an old stone château, garlanded in purple fuchsias and soft yellow roses, with gay borders of begonias and silver-leaved sedums.

The door opened and a serving man asked us to enter, saying he had been sent by his master who had seen us approach. So we went into a pair of salons, curiously opened to each other's view by an arch above the fireplace, with waxy floors and faint grey paneling, gay chintz, and old china; exquisite rooms of fine livable quality. A full-length Raeburn-like portrait of de Tocqueville dominated the whole room. The present Comte de Tocqueville entered, an old gentleman, small and alert, in a long blue hunting coat buttoned to his chin. He was delighted that as Americans we knew his grandfather's books.

"It is all very simple," he said, speaking of the view across the water, the centuries-old roof line and the roses, and the curious stone pigeon-tower, open to the sky, a survival of the days when only the seigneur could keep pigeons and no peasant might scare them from the grain.

With backward looks at the sunshine on ancient walls we went on to Barfleur in search of its picturesque harbor. The sibilant: *"Si, si, Barfleur,"* made us turn into the new end of an old, old street that led out to an enormously wide stone quay, bare and weather-washed and silvered by the sea, a fish-hook shaped quay, half-encircling a great basin in

the rocks. They were great black, ugly looking rocks, sinister and shiny, with the water fretting and fuming about them.

Forty-five fishing boats were in the harbor of the historic sea town, one-masted, yawl-like boats all lying on their sides, for the tide was low. Some had red hulls and some had gay blue stripes. The clean stone houses, tight and town-built shoulder to shoulder, bare and plain, seemed to have drawn back and huddled together out of the wind. Their stone roofs, grey or black, looked like dark caps pulled down over their brows.

On the quay fishermen were mending bronze-colored, ozier lobster pots, drying fish seines and ropes, and boiling tar in kettles. Last in the village stood the church, centuries old, dark, rising above its wall-retained, thick-filled graveyard; as if to stand between the parish and its peril. Out through these rocks of Barfleur centuries ago went the "White Ship" with William the Conqueror's grandson and one hundred and forty young companions, the flower of great Norman families, all to perish. Hundreds of years of men's danger and women's dread have been faced at this harbor mouth. Yet they stay, tenaciously holding their birthright. The world of waters is their home, their heritage the sea.

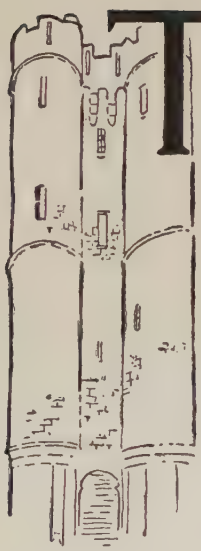
We turned under the stone to *les enfants* of Barfleur, *soldats et marins,* Brantomes and Duquesnes, passing again the hard-working fishers, their homes

and harbor, aiming southwest toward Coutances with Valognes as our first town. St. Vast was on the way, famed for its valiant sea-fights with Dutch and English and queer Quettchou, pronounced exactly like a terrific sneeze. One is curious to go there to hear how their tongues master such an assembly of consonants and vowels.

The cows of Normandy, famous for their cream and cheese, grazed in mile after mile of rich, green grass divided into little fields, by hedgy thickets that broke all the distances into irregular patches. Small school children in single file pattered along in sabots. There were homely scenes of hard work at the doors of the low stone houses and we came hungry into Valognes which remains in mind as an old town whose centre was an irregular *place* not even level, into which five roads poured themselves. It puts a brave face to the world but has seen better days and is now spoken of—it must be hard on the inhabitants—as a " decayed town." We ate well in a little shop sitting in the sunshine, while a youth from a garage, clever and inventive, cleaned a " spark " by tickling it vigorously with the bushy end of a piece of picture wire!

CHAPTER II

ON NORMAN ROADS



TOWNS of a size to have comfortable inns were not near together in this part of France. We wanted to reach Coutances, sixty kilometres from Valognes, and the October afternoon was well on.

Many narrow, deep-set, muddy footpaths led back from the road between high, earth-walled, ivy-covered hedges. It was from such green and bosky lanes that men went forth to fight at Hastings and leave the Norman impress on England.

Milk-maids passed us leading donkeys with a balanced board saddling their backs on which were placed great, glimmering brass jars, rotund and one-handled, full of milk. The milking hour had passed.

Descending a long hill the road ran out on a bare flat *marais* of great extent, a drained marsh of tawny sand and queer greens and sedgy marsh grass, across which a road had been raised. It was a desert over

which the mauve sunset flooded with a marvelous light. At its edge was a ruined village of roofless houses, with yawning doors and nettles growing on the broken hearths.

A good resolution always to put up for the night before darkness fell, was failing. An unpromising crossroad tavern had lodging *à pied et cheval* on the sign and a withered bush projecting from its wall to proclaim its thirst-quenching abilities.

Pop! pop! pop! Was it a dog at the left, rear wheel? Worse than that, a new cord tire was flat and had a great sabot nail sticking in it like a big-headed pin in a cushion. Coutances was still eight miles away and nothing near by. Darkness was creeping on. Theoretically we could change a tire. Out came the jack; off came the bolts and then the rim. The inflated spare one was taken from its rack, when along came a car bound for Coutances. It was the only motor we had seen all afternoon on this rural road. There were two men in it, a father and son. They jumped down from their seats and offered to help and wouldn't even let us hold the flashlight.

"Gaston knows how to do everything!" the father assured us. He demonstrated his ability in the finest of white chamois gloves, while the father held the light and talked.

"You are alone!" they murmured in horror as we thanked them. From a happily remembered

steamer box, they chose nut-filled dates, fortunately of superlative make. Quite surely they thought fruit grew that way in our strange land!

Another descent and a rugged climb brought us into the streets of ancient Coutances but the hotel was far beyond, near the railroad, and quite out of town.

What a day our first one on the roads of Normandy had been! The little hotel was primitive, with clean and restful rooms. The dinner was good. Forty diners sat down at the long table and everybody talked and speared cheese with little sharp knives and drank prodigious drafts of cider from unending bottles set like ninepins down the table.

The car had been put down cellar, under the dining-room. There was no door to the place. Here and in many another, the car had to be left in the open. The moon shone over a green and peaceful valley with old belfries and convent walls. Coutances towered above and its great bells boomed out the hours. There was much clattering up the bare waxed stairs until the forty guests went to bed. Then the moonlight clouded over, shutters banged and roofs creaked. By dawn all was tranquil outdoors but the forty, separately, had hot water and coffee, carried on a run by servants in wooden-soled shoes!

The day was fine. The car came out of the little basement and around by the tubs of flowers at the

front door and we were off to see the hill-perched town above. We had come down a long park-like avenue the night before but the old part of the town with the cathedral on the summit was visible at a neck-craning angle above as we turned up the nearest road. At first it was just a stiff slope but after a "z" or two it became too narrow for a turn and was meant for push-carts and pedestrians only.

Various well-intentioned shopkeepers and passers-by fluttered out to watch us attempt to go ahead. They urged our trying it. Just at the steepest grade a byway, under an old tourelle, gave us a chance to turn off the direct ascent. This alley was narrow but on it was a horse and cart. Reasoning that there must be a way out where the horse came in, we explored an old church, huddled on the hillside, until our advisers and the bystanders were gone. By going around an obscure route we drove up to the very summit where the cathedral, big enough for a metropolis, tops the town. It had great pointed arches and all the chapels that could possibly be put on and then a lady chapel far out beyond the choir. Overhead in the interior two paths ran in the clerestory, behind rails of openwork quatrefoils.

Ruskin was deeply interested in one of the steeples and so the world looks long at it. He thought this earliest of spires proved itself to be the outcome of roofing a tower. Certainly it adequately tops the skyline of Coutances. Bowered in a rich growth of

trees the point of the old high town emerges, to look and be looked at, over all the pleasant land.

Our determination was strong to reach Mont St. Michel for the next night for at the time of full moon the tides are highest. The moon over Coutances had been perfect. The Normandy route was here one of slopes, past hedgerows and apple trees, with fields and stone-built villages. We went through Quettreville where the flat-hatted, black-gowned curé, sunning at his door, greeted us in passing. The blue sea was sighted now to the west before coming into Granville on its point of land. On the descent to the shore was a sign-board, two feet square, by the side of the road, with a vivid wriggle on it like a streak of lightning or an active polly-wog—nothing more. Such signs had much to tell and are in use all over France; graphically and exactly they express the hidden turns and quirks of the road immediately ahead.

Old town, new town, sands and sea, fishermen and little ships, thus was Granville behind and Avranches twenty-five kilometres ahead. Not half that distance was gone when we met a disbanding cattle market and also noted in our Guide-Michelin, " circulation difficult on Saturday Market." It was Saturday very decidedly. However, France offers much to see at such gatherings, more than can be gained by speed. One can " circulate " at home.

Normandy is proud of her great straight-backed,

well-set-up cattle, brown and white, famous both for their milk and meat. Here was the fattest heifer being driven home by a peasant and his wife, both in heavy sabots. He wore a blue linen smock to his knees and had a long stick in his hand while she had a rosy face with a white fluted coif and strings under her chin and was tight-buttoned as to waist and voluminous as to skirts and wore a great square apron. They were having a good time driving the heifer and were squarely in the middle of the road. At sight of us the heifer frisked and ran and the blue blouse ran and the white coif ran, hither and yon. They were scarcely past when the road was again filled, this time with a man with four oxen, the first of hundreds we met on the roads of France. These were hairy and shiny with grooming. The method of driving oxen seems to be to shove the head of the near one and poke the far one gently with a rod. Gee and haw have no audible equivalent. One pair decided on the safety of the hedge, the others to stand where they were and sniff! It was our move so we crept quietly between them. The pair in the hedge swung out and put their yoked heads under the radiator. We stopped and the driver, thanking us as if he had his manners from his grandfathers, shoved and poked in great composure and gentleness, as polite to his *bêtes* as to us.

Next we came up with a beaming old woman smiling at us under her plain white *bonnet* of the kind

worn by the old. With her was a very small boy, who, however, carried the rod and was evidently the head of the house. They had a great fuzzy cow with a staid, placid countenance to whose horn was attached a string. Does every Norman buy a cow on Saturday, we wondered? If they were all so happy over their bargains where were the ones who had sold?

There were market carts, high ones with wheels of varnished nut-brown wood, six feet in diameter—we measured them! One with five white-coifed girls giggling in a row had a small pink pig netted down in the square of the cart behind them.

"The market must be over," was the consoling thought. "This is a little slow but there will be no difficulty in the town." Rounding a hill, there stood Avranches, perched as was Coutances on an abrupt hill and crowned by the fascinating, tip-tilted roofs of the old creamy-stone town. At its tree-bowered base by the railroad were the pens and the temporary fences of the biggest cattle market ever seen. Sheep, woolly and shorn, cows, young and old, dealers in stiff hats, peasants in blouses and in coifs, sheep here, cows there, dogs in between; nobody in a hurry, everybody happy, everybody chattering and buzzing and sparkling at each other. A market in Normandy is a most infectiously happy place.

The gates of the railroad were shut and so, looking up at the hill-set town against the sky and think-

ing that it could not be so beautiful from any other point or the impression more vivid, and noting that the hour was three and the destination still distant, we asked if it were possible to go around the hill. Our enquirant settled his elbows on the window of the car and his shoulders filled it.

He explained the intricacies of a lane, which encircled Avranches in the woods and fields at its base. He cleared his throat and leaned harder on the window frame—we must listen carefully. We must not pass Avranches. It far excelled Coutances. "Listen," he urged. "There is a botanical garden. Listen—Look, you can see it from here. Did you see the garden at Coutances?" We had indeed seen that garden with its snail cut in boxwood, forming a maze of most intricate pattern. "You have seen that and would look at Avranches at a distance?" he said, grieved and indignant.

Again the elbows settled into place. His head and shoulders came further in. "You must see my city. The bishop of Avranches built Mont St. Michel. Avranches ——" just then the railroad gates opened, we thanked him and started the engine. His fellow-citizens fearing for his life pulled him away and we were off thanking everybody out of both windows. Down we went through the rustic lane, narrow and winding in lush green woods and by embowered cottages. Always curving about the hill base, it rejoined the highway which had gone up

and down over the hill town with the unvisited garden.

A little more than half-way to Pontorson in a bare, sheep grazing country going down a hill, we slowed, realizing that here was a thrilling sight. As we looked toward the grey-blue sea, over a great open bay now to the north, there, as if suspended between heaven and earth, between the blue sky and the blue water, was Mont St. Michel. Its abbey-covered cone pointed up in steepled height; its shadowy reflection pointed down in the grey-blue water. All was so still, so shadowy, it seemed a vision, a mirage, across the soft green fields, merging with the grey sands and the quiet water. The horizonless bay melted into the sky. Just so it must have held the pious pilgrims of old who traveled this road. It was as if Mont St. Michel laid a spell upon us. Soon the road came into Pontorson, an old town, half feudal, half touristic, that guarded the marches and the marshes between Normandy and Brittany on their river boundary. Abruptly we turned toward the sea near the empty river bed, with only a few new houses and trees on the road. Sheep were feeding on the bright green, unhedged pastures, the *salés prés,* the salt meadows that give flavor to a famous mutton of the *gourmets.* The road was already on the new land that has risen from the sea in the last century.

Soon the last group of buildings was passed and

ahead flat silver sands stretched out to the lavender horizon, a sea of smooth fine sand. All the water had vanished and Mont St. Michel, a great violet-colored rock, tapering to a pinnacle, lay at the end of a narrow causeway which lost itself three kilometres away, under the Mont itself. Not a soul was in sight. It was so beautiful we did not want to hurry. It was too shadowy to delay. Nearing the Mont we saw that the battlemented wall descended to the sea sands. The roofs of the few houses within the walls seemed to clamber up the height to the abbey. A moment more and we were under the fortress wall—and there was no gate in it! The causeway simply ended at the great battlements. Fortunately a waiting driver was there.

"How do we get in?—we shall stay with Mme. Poulard." He was courteous. "These steps will take you over to the water-gate and madame is just inside the gate."

The steps led to a lightly-built walk on stilts over the sand. Another loiterer came up.

"The garage," we said. "See, our guide says the garage of Mont St. Michel."

They looked at the plausible print by a flashlight. "Oh, that is back on the mainland."

Turning with care on the causeway we hurried away to the mainland resolved to walk back to the Mont if necessary. Fortunately we found a garage and a man to take us out, and that at once, with our

bags. Again the sands and the violet Mont faced us; again lavender-grey color seemed spread on the stones of the road. Its beauty awed us into silence, and in the silence the man turned and said:

"The sea comes! *Le mare arrivé!*" Our miles of sand were gone—the sea had come as if magic had been done. It covered all the sands.

Unforgettable in its strangeness, in the dusk and the solemn loneliness, the sea had crept over miles. It was there beside us. Under the stilted footpath the sea was seething in the first reach of a long treacherous scallop, to the very stones of the water-gate where the old bombards and their stone balls, captured from the English on the sands, still guard the gate.

At the renowned "Inn of the omelet maker" welcome waited from roof to floor. We sat at a wood fire and talked to the madame. She was not the original but as a reproduction pleased very well. Her copper saucepans gleamed on the wall. The spit for roasting chickens, turning by clockwork, hung in the fire and she beat the famous omelet in an earthen bowl with a wire whisk of circled loops. She held no secret from us. It was to be cooked over the coals in a thin iron pan with a four-foot handle. We thought to eat dinner on the waxed oak table by the fire. But no! Up-stairs was the proper and slightly chilly room, and there the famous omelet came after the soup.

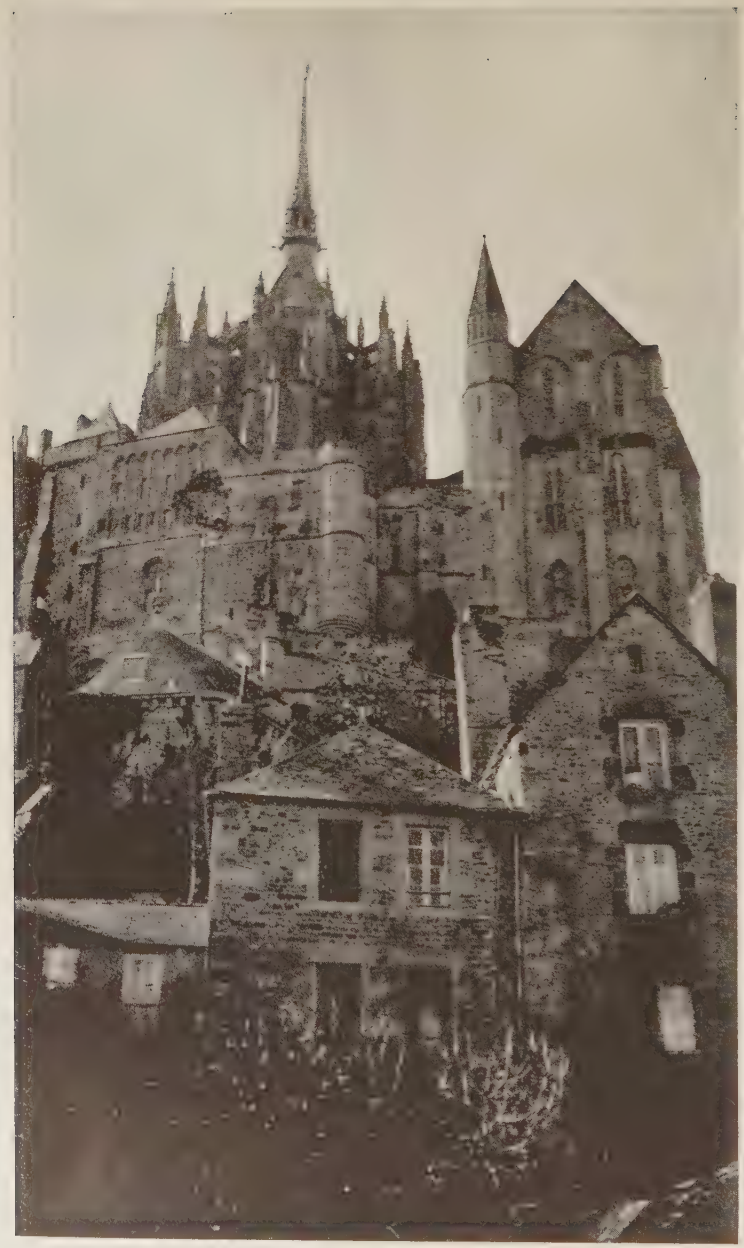
Strange it is that two eggs, a piece of butter, a pinch of salt and a turn of a pepper mill should make an inn *renommée* for fifty years and lay up a fortune for a family. The golden omelet was hot; it was creamy, not fluffy. It seemed to depend in its simple perfection on fresh Normandy butter and eggs. As the French say, you cannot have an omelet without breaking eggs and on some busy summer day six thousand eggs are whisked into their famous dish in this inn.

Enthusiasts such as we would not have been sitting by the fire and then leisurely eating omelet, if deep darkness had not settled on the world of waters, but we were still keen on the matter of high tides. Had not a sailing day from New York been chosen with an eye on the calendar to get to Mont St. Michel in a full moon? It seemed a good plan to discourse of high tides with the young master of the inn.

His locks were seven inches long and as he talked he shook his topknot in interrogative or sympathetic twirls. "The hour of high tides. I never know. You see," he told us, "the high rocks are back of the house and the town walls are in front. So I never see the sea! But I will let you know to-morrow!" And he lived in a one-street village, on a little islet surrounded by the sea.

The moon was emerging from a wrack of clouds. It would be fine to go out. The street was a canyon deep and narrow. The outlook at the one gate was

Ramparts of Mont St. Michel



HIGH-PILED MONT ST. MICHEL

very limited, but there were the battlements. With cloaks and hats we were away and at our room doors was a young-spirited, little, old chambermaid of seventy who was so keen about our seeing the sea, she almost went along. She did better. She opened a door on the same floor, third by American count, *deuxième* by French, that let out on a narrow wall-top over the inner portcullised town-gate and so on the battlements over the sea.

Mont St. Michel slept. One lanterned light shone in the canyoned street. The moon rose and holding each other by the elbows, we scudded through the black stretches and lingered along the walls in the moonlight, above the roofs of the houses, over the sea, around the towers, up the heights, down in the depths, peering through loopholes, leaning on the parapets. We had Mont St. Michel all to ourselves, alone with the moonlight and the tide-driven sea. In the solitude long sweeping white lines lapped forward toward the land. Stealthily and smoothly another line came in the silvery light. It was an eerie place when a cloud rose toward the moon.

A crowd is always a disillusioning accompaniment to a great thing. Barring two ancient English ladies whose occupation and pleasure seemed to consist in glaring at each other in frozen silence, the hotel had no other guests. It seemed a place to try out the theory that motoring was not to be a hurry, see-quickly, and let-us-be-on method of travel but a

means of getting to places of beauty in a pleasant and appropriate approach.

The lights of dawn were pink and grey. The sun rose behind the Mont. The whole island seemed fast asleep. At a less heroic hour when the cheerful old chambermaid brought coffee and a roll and fussed about the curtains and was horrified to find the window open, she again knew her island for she said: "Will you walk on the sand? It is hard around the island now."

The astonishing place was again in a sea of dry sand. One came to understand how monks and pilgrims, even armies and cannon approached this island before the days of the causeway. They came not alone by boat but by walking out miles from the shore. It seemed a happy idea to get this effect by walking around the island on the sand, where last night the deep water had come. Several carts belonging to fishermen hauling seines and seaweed and supplies had crossed by a cart-track leaving the causeway a quarter of a mile back.

The sand as we walked was very fine in grain. Though slimy near the gate, it was very hard and pleasant underfoot as we started around the western end. We looked out five miles to the open sea and far above us to the battlemented rocks and the Abbey perched on the summit. There aloft was St. Michel and his glittering sword. At times the engirdling battlements and towers came abruptly to the sand,

at times there were rocks and brush. At the sea-facing side a set of steps had been roughly cut in the nose of the rocks making a clambering path to a chapel, very often under the waves. We found a way down again to flat rocks under the trees of a wooded bank, all that is left of the sea-swallowed forest of Sousy. We went on under the round towers of the ramparts at whose base, in the moonlight, there was deep water where we now walked.

Sea-gulls were stirring and settling miles away on the grey smooth sands. A few fishermen, bare-legged, and with creels on their backs searched far out toward the island of Tombelaine. The causeway then came in sight and it was satisfying to be safely around before the tide should turn. The unbroken line of sixty and even one hundred feet of medieval masonry offered only clinging on a rock under the wall, if the tide should come slipping in.

Within fifty feet of the causeway there was an unexpected channel of water from the foot of a tower out across the sand. Its depth was not a drowning matter but far more than a wading one. There was no boat or fisherman within call. The circling of Mont St. Michel had been a beautiful walk, not long or wearisome but now it must be done on a return, over the steps by the chapel and all, before that vagarious tide should return. The fishermen and their dogs, far out, were now skurrying in.

Sand has a queer way of pulling at hurrying feet.

Under the towers, across the flat rocks, under the old forest trees, up the rough steps and down again, out in the bright sun—the sea was no longer the distant water five miles away. It had not visibly moved. Simply, it was nearer.

There were no carts at the water-gate when it came in sight. The sea was near, spreading long, flat, quiet scallops, miles of curves, closer and nearer. No one was there to see us run. The sea was on the stones in the sand at the water-gate as we turned about in safety under the arch. It comes no farther. The causeway was again only a ribbon of road to the mainland and the old tale of the galloping horseman whose steed could not keep ahead of the engulfing waters, seemed very real even though to us it seemed more like a subtle alchemy, a change from sand to sea.

They were making another omelet at the inn. The spiney lobster, the *langouste* of this shore and the bristling little English ladies offered distraction from our adventure.

The narrow street, the only one, *La Rue,* passed under the King's gate with its portcullis and armorial bearings up a steep grade, past ancient houses and turrets and gables crowded in between the high-rising rock and the battlemented sea-wall. Through the centuries pilgrims have gone up, thousands still on summer days. Past the trinket shops and the little rival restaurants and the curé's rose garden and

the house where Du Guesclin left his young wife, Tiphane, while he went to fight the battles of France, the street became a long flight of stone steps. It still ascended, letting us see out over the water to the distant coast of Normandy.

The ascent kept on until the stone platform on the summit of the rock was reached, the floor of one end of the abbey church which fell in 1776. The pyramidal rock had been buttressed out into a building site not truncated to hold the prodigious, centuries-long-in-building, monastic pile.

It has all been empty since the Revolution. There are now no monks in France. The whole abbey was a solitude in the tourist-free autumn. The guide, an enthusiast, was pleased when asked if he were a Tourangeau, for his distinct, clear speech could only be of Touraine. Every crypt and hall and cloister was explored with him the first day and the next morning was spent loiteringly seeing the things always to be remembered, the round-arched nave of reddish stone built in the ten-hundreds, burned out by lightning and wars and misuse, but beautiful still; and the choir of the fifteen-hundreds, contrastingly flamboyant. It is on the central tower of this church, five hundred feet above the sea—and quickly rising feet they are—that the gilded St. Michel draws his crinkly sword. This statue was renewed after 1900, thus making continuous twelve centuries of building.

The French speak of Mont St. Michel as the Marvel of the West. The word *Marveille* when one is here, is definitely applied to one building, a great rectangular mass fastened on the rock top, whose upper story is on a level with the church floor, and all built in twenty-five years of intense activity in the twelve-hundreds with oxen toiling over the sands with the stones, and human toil carrying them on to this rock. We entered at the top into the cloisters with two hundred and more light, polished granite shafts, two by two in arcades, embellished by monarch after monarch. It is a graceful, airy square up against the sky. The monks put a garden there but like Pomona's experiment on the canal boat, the earth and the rain were too much for the rooms below, so for centuries it has been lined to catch rain, for this islet is short of water.

The refectory that adjoins was to us the supreme impression of the abbey, a great hall with sixty slim, tall windows side by side, set yard deep in the slanting embrasures so that the hall appeared to have a long row of pilasters with arches over the windows, under its barrel-vaulted ceiling. The windows themselves were just eleven inches wide. They were set at the level of the head, so that the sky alone could be seen and nothing of the world, by those who entered to eat.

This monastery was rich—so rich that it was necessary to build fortifications around it. The state

furnished troops to defend it, but for six hundred years its Benedictine monks used no fires to warm themselves and ate no meat. In the refectory there was no glass. The winds blew on them as they ate and as they slept. If they were frail, a buckler of lead was set behind them. We wondered that men could so live.

Then up spoke our Tourangeau: "It was their habit as it is mine. I have lived here twenty years, summer and winter, and am not allowed any fire. Fires are forbidden for danger to the abbey."

Under the refectory, for the building has always been used from the top, was the great guest room with groined and pillar-supported vaulting, where kings and their suites were lodged on royal pilgrimages. Our fancy placed Francis I by the fireside, for royalty might be warmed. There were others to choose from, for Mont St. Michel put either fear or faith into many monarchs.

The hall paired with this was the famous Salle des Chevaliers, ninety and more feet long, living up to the claim of being the finest Gothic room in Europe. It had a double line of great round pillars holding up the cloisters above. To this room Louis XI, in 1469, summoned his nobles, those whom his craftiness had left alive, to institute the order of knighthood of St. Michel. How they must have feared his gold collar and jeweled star!

We walked the battlements again by daylight, ap-

preciating the piled effect as if the abbey stood on a pillar, so well seen from the sea-wall towers. The *muettes,* the white sea-gulls, were crying and wheeling over the sea. It was all too beautiful to leave. Henry Adams stayed six weeks! And yet in Cherbourg someone had said: "Mont St. Michel? Well, after you have eaten the omelet twice, what is there to do?"

With a last look in the dusk at the old houses, the watch tower, the portcullis, the people out talking to each other after their day of trinket-selling, fishing, or snail-gathering, we came in reluctantly only to hear a wild commotion on the sands. Two brilliant headlights were crossing on the oozy cart path from the causeway. A car wavered and roared and slewed about. The gears shifted, the muffler snorted, the water splashed, but the car came in the water-gate!

Out poured madame, her son, the cook, the boots, the little old chambermaid, all wringing their hands and calling upon heaven in a chorus of *"Mon Dieus!"* Such a thing had never happened before. It was not possible! Where should they put him?

It was an American and his London-married bride. It was their first day in France and they, too, had looked for the garage to be on the island. La Rue is too narrow for a car to go more than two hundred feet, just to the inn door. There was a great confabulation and to the huge delight of every-

one the green tables and wicker chairs were cleared aside and the car was backed into the tea-room! An American motor was the first within the ramparts of Mont St. Michel!

CHAPTER III

INTO BRITTANY

WITH an early start to the mainland and many backward looks at the dream-like island, we were off past the sheep on the bright green polder land behind the dykes, across the canalized little river into Brittany. A shore road, romantic and lane-like, had hundreds of stone cottages, bowered in apple trees and covered in heavy thatch. All seemed to have eyebrows of thatch over little attic windows and all were low and picturesque in outline. They were mossed and lichened by time into green and yellow, in colorful beauty, but the floors were of damp earth and the hill crowded against their back walls. Their low bank-side setting gave them a sheltered, protected beauty just out of sight of the sea.

Brittany is at its best in the autumn, so the French believe. The whole lane was busy this October day carting fragrant apples or mounding apples, yellow and red, in dooryards or putting them in cider presses. All was odorous with the pungent smell of new cider. Square apple presses, eight feet high, were oozy with

juice from alternate layers of pomace and wheat straw and each had a beam for a horse or men to push around.

Whole caravans of apple wagons were on the road. All the carts that were not filled with fruit were hauling cider barrels; while coopers worked at their doors bending withes into spiral hoops with cleverly caught ends. The whole lane seemed in a veritable hum with the industries of autumn.

The road emerged on an open dyke where away to the north the great landmark stood out, recalling that Victor Hugo said Mont St. Michel is to the sea what the Pyramid of Cheops is to the Desert. The vivid, green pastureland had round patches of brilliant red samphire glowing through it.

Lining the dykes were wind-swept fishing villages with cone-topped windmills of stone, defiantly set with great sweeping arms. There were water-gates to let the drainage out and to control the sea's entry. Here a new dyke had pushed out and the field enclosed was not yet cleared of salt. The road mounted the headland toward Cancale on the west of the bay and Mont St. Michel was still a distant lavender vision.

Peasants were plowing on this high land with three immense horses harnessed tandem. Turnips grew behind hawthorn hedges and by the road was a mile of high stone wall enclosing a house whose gates were tight-closed and backed with sheet metal so

no one could see in. There was great satisfaction in thinking how much those within lost by not being able to see out. A fine eighteenth-century mansion was now only a farmhouse in a cabbage field. The road on the route northward on the headland dipped into several wooded valleys that made one think of Enoch Arden's hazel copse.

In size Cancale was half-way between a town and a village, with close-built houses of two or three stories—which was not as one expects fishermen to live. A fisherman deserves a small house all his own. But the little town arrived at the water beautifully. It was bluff-set and at the base we saw at low tide, a great submerged checker-board of hundreds of acres. These were the famous oyster-beds where oysters are matured for several years after being brought in from the sea and spread in these separately owned sea-floors. The Cancale oysters have rough shells, are tawny in color, and have a coppery taste to an unacquainted palate, but the Parisian drinks the very juice from the shell with joy.

A waterside settlement under the bluff was full of overturned boats with lumbering big hulls and deep keels. Everywhere was a good smell of pitch and oakum and drying fish. Away beyond two rocky islets lying below a mass of deep, dark pines, came a fleet of white sails, thirty or more, all sailing in one long tack, all glinting in the sun, all bound in from mackerel fishing in the Channel.

From the meadow at the bluff edge the high-water mark showed that these oyster-beds were twice a day under twenty-five feet of water. Turning back to the car, for sundry "*interdites*" and footpaths marked for "*pietons*" had warned us to leave it back from the cliff, on a fisherman's street, we saw six different men, dressed in their Sunday best, each carrying a salt codfish home by the tail. Had they been paid off from a cruise with a fish as a farewell perquisite?

Oysters and tinker mackerel were offered by weather-beaten women, strong with sea-work on seines and creels. The shabby church had a mutilated monument to a benefactor, a native, one Vaujoyeux who died in Philadelphia in Girard's time, whose good deeds live here after him. Further along the highway toward St. Malo we caught sight of a classic pediment, the home of Desilles, the young hero of Nancy who threw himself in front of guns mowing down a street revolt. Nancy honors him by the great Desilles arch across its thoroughfare. Seeing these two things associated with places we knew seemed curiously like meeting with friends in this quiet byway of the world.

Bright blue, two-wheeled carts passed with long tipping floors contrived for rolling barrels. Peddlers with their wares were tootling on pipes for trade. We traveled two hours on a sea-dyke with small stone houses, harsh and black, on the landward

side of the road, passing windmills and old towers whose arms were gone. Then we came to the gayety of the casinos and villas at Paramé.

Ahead of us against the sunset sky were the dark rocks and fortifications and the high steeple and housetops of St. Malo as if set against a halo, with the sea, green and purple from cloud shadows, between.

There was a great basin on the landward side, full of masted ships. Under a threatening, round-towered castle, the road entered the only land gate. St. Malo is a tight-built old town on a walled island, so packed with high houses it seemed popping over, like an overfull basket. This was our first entry with the car under a town gate. A motto, "Semper fidelis" and "better to die than a blot" was sufficiently distracting and made a small sign "*au pas*" very alarming, for three tippeted policemen faced us in a row and we forgot that "*pas*" is other than "not" and here meant "at a footpace."

The police were mild and helpful. Place Châteaubriand, the only open space inside the walls, was before us. The two hotels—Châteaubriand himself was born in one—were on this place. The garage was under the shelter of the town walls, now more useful to keep off the sea-wind than the enemy.

In the morning, the maritime, individual air of St. Malo made its personality felt. This old stronghold of French naval glory has an independent poise.

It is built on a rock; it sits in the sea. From its ramparts one looks down on the sands—the rocks and the little grass-topped islets. On the nearest we saw a low rail and an unmarked cross, the romantically placed grave of Châteaubriand, their great author and St. Malo's lover all his varied life.

In 1791, when many another young aristocrat voyaged from home, he was in America, and talked with Washington. He lived with the Indians. He married an émigré and starved in London. Later, he lived as a great Frenchman in the Rue du Bac, in Paris, and as a vain old man called daily on Mme. Récamier—but at heart he was a Malouine all his life and his grave is where he wished to be.

The ramparts were topped by a generous stone path twelve feet wide, now a promenade encircling the close-packed town and overhanging, in turn, the sea, the River Rance and the harbor and basins. The restless sea beat on the sands far below and fretted on knotty tree boles driven in for spiles. Long lines of washing, sheets and shirts, were hung on pegged lines on a sunny stretch of sand, the only open space available. The town fire-hose of cotton, just scrubbed, was hung on the wall to dry. Hundreds of little bathing houses on wheels were stored under the lee of the stone promenade. Along the river-front of St. Malo a long line of great eighteenth-century mansions, five stories in height, seemed craning upward with high dormers and tall chimneys

and blue roofs, as if to look out over the wall. These old houses had graceful iron balconies with crowns and enlaced "L's." Their eaves had stone urns and "1727" on them. They were level with us as we walked. Miles of these houses mark the era of St. Malo's prosperity, when the Canadian provinces brought great riches to this French port. Nothing modern has been built in close packed St. Malo. Even this fringe of building was made possible by Marlborough's destructive cannonade. The broad River Rance sparkled on the outside of the wall, with its tidal fall of forty-five feet and the green-set shore of Dinard lay beyond.

The steep hill inside the walls was not difficult to drive on, although everybody was out on the narrow streets and made no pretence of staying on the sidewalks. Busy shops were bright and gay but overhead were the hoary, ancient, unchanged buildings. Crowds of peasants were waiting at the door of a bank for a lottery drawing, with gleeful, hopeful faces.

In the cathedral, down twelve steps and tightly built in from sight, though its openwork spire dominated all St. Malo, a parish priest was instructing a hundred boys, each with a little black head above a sombre black pinafore, murmurously telling of the *"Bon Dieu"* and answered in a chorused treble of young voices.

It was a great, solemn, dusky, old place, silvery in

color. Before the altar was a tablet in the floor that made the whole town live: "Here knelt Jacques Cartier—*'a son depart pour la decouverte du Canada le 16 Mai 1535.'*"

So spirited a place was St. Malo it governed itself at times, made terms with kings and had eight sea fights with the English. It could make a gift of thirty million francs to Louis XIV to help in a war. So brave were they at sea that Louis decreed his admiral ship should be manned entirely by Malouines. So famous were its sons, Jacques Cartier, Barbonais, the first Frenchman to sail around the world, Maupertius of geometry fame, and painters and writers and diplomats known to every Frenchman that Châteaubriand made that happy Breton boast: "Fairly satisfactory for a town the whole of which is not as big as the Tuileries Garden!"

We left St. Malo under the heavy round tower called the "Grumble-who-may," built by Anne de Bretagne to control the "furrow," still the only path in and out. It was possible to see on the tower's side in the bright sunshine the old worn French letters the resolute little lady ordered cut there: "Grumble who may it is my good pleasure."

Ahead were the basins where lay the Newfoundland fishing fleet just home from a seven months' cruise on the Banks across the Atlantic. They go out in April with high hopes and two hundred tons of Portuguese salt and are home again in October

laden with great flat, yard-long, salt-buried cod-fish.

By count, the basin now held forty-five boats. There were hundreds before the war. The heavy craft had tall masts and glorious rigging and spars. They were tied up quietly at the stone quays. Their crews of thirty to thirty-eight men had gone home to the country, until spring, with only one or two left on board to unload and mend and paint.

Upside down in stacks of eight their dories lay on their decks, small, flat-bottomed, primitive; yet in each, two men fish in the open sea day after day, in fog and rain and sun. Jacques Cartier went out in this Newfoundland fleet in 1523 and brought back a chief and some Indians to show to St. Malo. The same Breton fleet with two thousand men went in 1923 in the same way, for habitude means much here.

At St. Servan were more "*Terre Neuve*" boats and a great weighing and counting going on. Fish were being brought up under the eye of the customs man on the wharf, who tallied when the 200 kilogramme weight balanced. Two fish were handed by the tails from one to another out of the hold, to the stacker on the balance. Women helped in another transfer, fish by fish, to a cart on the dock.

The smell of the sea, the ship carpenters caulking in the dry basin, the scorching of tipped-over ships with bundles of burning furze, the sizzling pitch, all was as it must have been in the great days of Ameri-

can shipping at Salem and Portsmouth and New Bedford. There was a fascination in it that made us linger and talk and find that most of the fish are eaten in Spain. Here was the *Star of the Sea* and next to her the *Rose of the Morn.* In their stout balustered deck-rails and sea-chests was the old romance of those who go down to the sea in ships.

At St. Servan was a tower called Solidor, on a black rock by the waterside, a three-part tower like a clover leaf, tall and gloomy against the sky, which has guarded the landing place since the 1400's. From its base started out little launches called vedettes which darted about the river and crossed to Dinard. The solidity of the quay at Dinard would honor a man of war but the connections between the little boat and the quay were such it was better to be without a car in crossing to the resort beloved by the well-to-do French and by many English. Under cliffs topped with villas was a hole in the cliff where footpaths lead to the western side of a promontory, onto a white, half-moon beach, set around with hotels and a casino. Great villas with shiny-leaved shrubbery gave fine effect of wealth and luxury. Even the sea seemed docile and mannerly compared with boisterous St. Malo.

Motoring, we found, gives a sense of continuity between towns, of relationship one with another and there were Vitré and Dol and the city of Rennes lying inland from the coast just traveled, that could

all be reached in a day's loop. As we started for Vitré, the park-like country was green and fresh, very irregularly broken into fields by rows of small, slim trees stripped of every branch for firewood. Ahead across miles of land the country looked like thin woods, but passing field by field, it was grazing land with every third field plowed. All was bowered, near the farmhouses, with apple trees; under them lay tons of apples in piles. On some of the trees, so heavy was the crop, the branches rested on circles of crutches.

It was the first day of November. Down lanes and on the road, lines of people passed, solemnly clad, while the church bells sonorously sounded over hushed villages. The graveyards blossomed with bright flowers. This was All Saints' Day, a very solemn day in France, though in the fields there were hunters with their dogs and guns looking for birds and hares. In this old, long-lived-in country the *chasse* is still pursued not by the few but by many. It is regarded as a national asset and anyone may be a *chasseur* if he pays the state for a license.

The men were picaresquely costumed. They had fine setters or beagles and small was the village that did not have a gunshop. On this run to Vitré every field seemed to have a hunter and a dog both posed, alert, nose in air. Like a woodland scene in a comic opera, one fat man wreathed in smiles wore a long brown cape that refused to meet over a six-inch

Rue Beaudrairic, Vitré

An Oriel, Château of Vitré

leather belt. A high peaked hat with a feather topped his figure, and a burnished gun and an Irish setter completed his reddish-brown outfit.

It was a sheltered-looking country with two great stone-arched bridges and a broad, green-shadowed canal that brought us under the château walls of Vitré. Now a rough barracks for black troops from Africa, it was a Protestant stronghold in the 1580's when the town was held in a terrible struggle against the Leaguers. The Huguenots were banished by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Vitré has run to seed for three centuries. Its high-towered fortress, considered the most imposing in France, stands desolate but dominant above the weedy moat. It was not the cared-for château of a happy town. A fine oriel window in the courtyard had the words *Post tenebras spero lucem* cut upon it: words that were a sign from one Huguenot to another of his faith.

Vitré had a forbidding frowsy inn, though the women were beautifully coifed in tall white cones of embroidery. We bought only *essence* and decided to go hungry to another town. But first we drove through the long medieval streets, with timbered houses, carved and galleried. Some had heavy oak staircases mounting in the open air from story to story. The Rue Baudrarie and two others were sombre and gloomy, seeming to have sunk, crushed into the ground by the weight of centuries.

But Vitré was not all like this. These old streets led up to a great, curious-shaped, low-set church. The outer wall had on it a three-faced head whose ingenuity was more marked than the pious purpose to express the Trinity. There were a score of famous Limoges enamels inside this church. Thinking how deserted the town, how vacant the streets, how empty all the houses, we opened the church door. The whole town was inside! Thousands were packed on the great floor of this fifteenth-century church, with white coifs by the hundred. All heads were bowed in a solemn service which went on and on.

Close by the door, as if to make up for the unseen enamels, stood a most gorgeous man, the Swiss of Vitré, six feet in height, in light blue with a huge, foot-high cocked hat, all outlined in feathers of bright rose, fully two feet from tip to tip, as it spanned above his ears. His shoulders were slung in a sash of rose-pink with gold; his gilt halberd towered far above his head. Flaubert's description of a French sacristan came to mind: "as resplendent as a saint on a holy pyx." No need for him to tap on the stones for order; a beadle like that of Vitré just stood; and there was silence.

An African regiment was quartered in the town. The men were black and huge. This afternoon, they were wandering up and down by the old castle walls, with red fezzes on top of their dark heads,

clad in mustard-colored uniforms and baggy-legged trousers. They were idle, uninterested, lonely, and carried an air of human isolation. Their commanding officer, an Algerian, came in sight. He outshone the Swiss! He was statuesquely tall and red fezzed. From his tremendous shoulders to his ankles, in exact folds, hung a great, deep-red military cloak. He made a silent progress down the street like a born master of men—and we had thought all vitality gone from Vitré!

We took a road of which Victor Hugo says: "It comes from Vitré and had the honor of jolting Mme. de Sévigné's carriage," and were soon in modern and manufacturing Rennes. Tall chimneys and the first factories to be seen on the route were on the canal and river banks.

Rennes was the capital of old Bretagne, but it had a fire in the 1700's which cleared the site. A prosperous city stands there to-day, filled with public buildings, a Palais de Justice and great fountains, schools and colleges, philanthropies and residence streets of modern prosperity. It was an ascending city, with its factories below in its faubourgs. On the height was a public garden, a peaceful promenade, with aviaries and flowers, and an allée of huge oaks leading to a belvedere over the city below. They have even managed to preserve the house of Du Guesclin, the Breton hero, a superlative specimen of ancient architecture, all the better appre-

ciated from standing unique; one wonders how it was spared and also how many towns he lived in!

The Dreyfus trial gave the Breton capital modern prominence. The trial, being military not civil, was held in the barracks near the exercise field, in a building far from palatial. We passed under the shadow of this centre of bitterness and racial hatred, so rabid Zola's name was stricken from the Legion of Honor for his opinions.

The road on to Dol was flat and deep-drained. Small dairy farmers fitted the French description: "the type which exults in even the smallest separate cottage and garden as a lion rejoices in his den."

Dol was bare and immaculately clean, centred about an open rectangular market-place paved with large flat stones. Remote and quiet, it all had an unchanging look. We entered this market-place as if we had driven the car into the scene of Victor Hugo's "Ninety-three." Here on these stones the Vendean army slept under the July stars.

Houses of the fifteenth century were arcaded on strong dark pillars. Each had a roof-tree free of its neighbors, in capricious gables of blue or red, set above an ancient façade. There was a broad circular stone well at one end of the market-place. Here in the Revolution the simple loyal peasants, who "obeyed from friendship" slept without discipline in the street. Suddenly one peasant woke to see three Republican cannon at the entrance. "They

had fallen asleep under the stars and awoke under a volley of grapeshot." Heaping their carts together they made a barricade. They fought behind the old stone pillars still supporting the houses, as if they were the trees of their woods.

Gloomy and plain, the lichen-coated cathedral stood like a stronghold at the edge of Dol on the summit of the retaining wall. Huge, mismated towers gave it character. The church could be walked around in a most felicitous way, both on the ground and on the roof, with views far over the fertile flatness to where windmills whirl on one abrupt hill.

The lonely interior had more fine pointed arches than there are now people in the whole *très petite ville* as Stendhal termed Dol. The sun shone into the cathedral through some of the finest thirteenth-century glass in France. Its color flooded the whole lofty, grey nave. Its choir windows so glorified the place, in the brilliant morning sunlight, that a violet illumination seemed poured over the worn stones of the floor. At the end of the choir, a window of seven long arches with a huge stone circle above, glowed in violet and green. Forty-eight themes were in the window, so masterly in their placing, each in a square outlined against a quatrefoil, that each seemed a jewel of color looking down from a frame.

In the stillness of the cathedral, for it retains that dignity by sharing a bishop with two other places—

watching the light from the old glass, I was startled by a loud rush, a sort of strong sibilant swish. Was an arch or a transept going to fall? Somebody has to be there!

It was an old woman and a little girl, the caretakers, who had come in, pulling an Aubusson carpet over a tessellated floor! The old woman chuckled at the fright she had given and fell to brooming with vigor. The carpet was their best, she said, and was out for yesterday's *Toussaint* but must be folded away. She showed me the choir stalls, with monks' heads carved on them, every one different. She knew them all and was as cheerful and housewifely in her cathedral as if she were in her Breton kitchen; and proud to tell that they still had one canon to sit there in the choir stalls built for sixty.

CHAPTER IV

SOME BRITTANY INNS

THE proverbial crossing of a river on coming to it faced us in approaching Dinan. The broad Rance is not bridged before Dinan, where there is a very old stone bridge, whose end has been cut off to let boats through! The disconcerting knowledge that Dinan sits on a bluff two hundred and thirty feet above the river gorge and is approached by one of the steepest inhabited streets in the world did not help matters. It seemed best to slip up cautiously and reconnoitre. The guide-books told of approach by train and by boat and had pictures of a high-level bridge, ten-arched across the valley, but all such bridges had been for railroads, so far as we had seen them.

France has no road book such as we have and the Guide-Michelin alphabetically, not consecutively arranged, has a fondness for garages and hieroglyphics and a blind faith that any motorist can find his way into any town.

When the curious river was reached it was a narrow stream far out in a grey bog. In a few miles

south it was a deep green river in a narrow valley. Then Dinan came in sight, boldly placed on its bluff, with walls embattled against the sky and great trees. It was far across from our road from Dol and with a steep-edged ravine between. Though many inquiries had been made from garagists, from peasants, even from an infantry captain about a *bac,* a ferry, or a bridge, none had told us that the Dol road runs over that great viaduct. Like Fox River this was crossed when we came to it.

The view was widespread up and down the deep wooded banks now rich in bronzed autumn coloring. Houses and bright kitchen gardens were on the deep-set level by the stream. Far below us was the centuries-old bridge that no longer arched the flood. An easy route ascended with an entry behind Dinan under the deep-moated towers of the Duchess Anne, built to defend the town on the plateau side.

Huge half-round towers, with heavily bracketed parapets, jutted out from great red stone walls. The habitable part of the château had a lofty keep from whose top, a hundred feet above the trees, the roofs and belfries of old Dinan could be seen and far out over the open country. The stone rooms in the five-centuries-old pile had romantic embrasures at their windows, with stone benches along their sides. The hall had a generous fireplace twelve feet across, and mysterious spying places from the staircase. The kitchens were dark and difficult.

On in Dinan was a great open *place* planted with a margin of interlaced trees. A good array of small public buildings were around its sides looking out upon an equestrian statue of the hero of Dinan, Du Guesclin. In 1359 this was the scene of a single combat when he offered to fight any knight and on the outcome, the English garrison should go or stay. The town had been attacked and sacked once. Du Guesclin saved Dinan the horror of more.

Down in the old part of town where the houses rest on great chamfered timbers set on the curbstones and the life of the streets goes on under the overhanging stories, there was an old, half-sided church called St. Sauveur. Its transept had a black slab of porphyry set against the wall with a deep-cut inscription in old French: "*Cy Git;* Here lies the heart of Du Guesclin. His body lies with the kings of France. His heart is here." There was something loved and loving in it: the mouldering old church, the great black stone, the queer eagles on it, the kings of France asking that he be with them at St. Denis, but his heart in the town he saved.

Dinan is beautiful and prosperous, yet medieval, a place of great elms. Clock bells ring from unseen belfries overhead in streets so narrow that walking in one called Petit Pain, the sky could just be seen between the nodding gables and outstretched fingertips spanned from wall to wall. A motor could not enter the pinched outlets. The Rue du Jerzual, the

"steepest in Europe," like an incline plane, narrow and abrupt, descended direct to the river. It passed old timbered houses with stories thrice overhung, with panes of bull's-eye glass and window-boxes of bright flowers, and was arched by a town gate halfway down.

All the Rue du Jerzual seemed to have onions in its kettles and to be buying from barrows, carrots washed to dazzling brightness. It was a happy sort of street, though poor. On the precipitous slope a woman bantered at her door with a man with a long gun. The man with glee poked the gun at her—more in gesture than in fact—and twenty heads came out at door and window and attic and were at once all in the group, all laughing, calling out, enjoying it. They and theirs had lived in intimate neighborliness for centuries.

Dinan was hard to leave that day as we took the westward road between orchards and banked walls growing thick with gorse and furze. Silvery with autumn, the bracken stood on slender stems, veil-like above the deep green spiky furze. There were slender haystacks twenty feet high, piled around tall slim saplings and often topped off with an old hat or a bunch of straw made into a rain-shedding summit.

The low-set stone houses along the way were harsher in outline than in Normandy, roofed with either slate or thatch. Mischievous magpies, large,

black-and-white birds, vividly marked, *pies* as they are called, flashed across the road, always in pairs.

For miles approaching Lamballe there was an avenue of stately elms, a veritable aristocracy of roadside, as if the Princess who had her title from this village—she who wondered the poor did not eat brioche rather than cry for bread—had subtly left a sense of quality upon the countryside. Loyalty to her friend took her, as Saint Amand tells, from the Channel back to Paris at the news the royal family had been brought in from Versailles. Starting at night and at once, with the mob peeping in at her Tuileries window, she stood by her queen till her own head was on a pike.

Lamballe lies under a hill crowned by a church which was once the family chapel. The long river-side street was full of stables, harness makers and trainers with haltered horses, for this is a state horse-raising centre. A top-of-the-world highland with moors stretched off into the distance. Dark clouds were piled to the south and west over the undulating sweep of hills. It was a land where the black soil was being ploughed with tandem horses crossing the fields in long furrows, a woman leading and a man holding the plough. There were stretches mile after mile where the fields were going back to furze.

In a great sweep toward the sea, the road came down from these moorlands to a village, hungry

looking in its bareness, called Uffiniac, with nets and boats and fishermen. On from this was stony Langueux, where a view back at the in-pointing cove to the sandy inlet of Uffiniac had a tragic, bleak quality of beauty.

St. Brieuc was neared—it is only thirty kilometres from Dinan—through more avenues of trees, a place of twenty-five thousand. It had a hotel with music and tea-drinking. Its comforts were welcome. We came to say to each other: "*Moyen age* one night makes *chauffage* appreciated the next!"

A good hotel, away from Paris, offers many points of interest to the traveler who approaches it each day with zest and enjoyment. The bed is luxuriously soft, a little too downy for American taste, made with long linen sheets and a round neck-breaking bolster rolled in the end of the lower sheet. The pillows have buttons completely across one side, making all one-sided as to use. The upper sheet is turned down over the blankets half-way to the foot. Unfortunately this hygienic idea is minimized by a satin or chintz bedspread to match the heavy curtains at the window. To make beds, a *valet de chambre* flies at them with vigor, a sort of frenzy, often leaping like a counter jumper in old English prints, while the *femme de chambre* only changes towels. Even in villages the number of fluttering servants required to run a small inn is wastefully impossible from our point of view. There is always

an armoire with mirrored doors, a solid table and a sturdy bench on which to open bags.

Outside shutters of metal were closed for us at night to exclude cold and light. Night air from an opened window is regarded as madness especially if heat is wanted. Nowadays there is hot water heat in winter turned on at dark if the day is sunny, not in meanness but necessary thrift in a country whose coal is imported.

At St. Brieuc and many other places the walls were bizarre, with mauve and black stripes in huge lines. And the light? Electricity offers an opportunity for national expression. Turn a button, a light springs up in the dressing room. Turn again, it is over the bed. Again, up springs the one in the ceiling which is so counterbalanced it can be drawn down for reading. Turn again—you may get darkness but never two lights at once—or for that matter the one you expect.

St. Brieuc was a busy place next morning. Its streets were lined with tipped carts—the horses were stabled—and its open squares were filled with hundreds of white-coifed country women standing alert and clean, with baskets lined with white linen at their feet. They were filled with rolls of golden butter. All around below the square towers of the old cathedral green tarpaulins were set up over booths. Always the peasants sell to the town-dwellers and buy from booths and shops, cloth,

sabots, ropes, seeds, baskets and harness. Fine cakes and pastries are set out in shop-windows in great variety for the market trade.

This butter market is the famous one of Brittany. The buyers go about armed with little sharp knives for tasting. All the white caps were bobbing in animation, the whole market-place buzzed with chaffering and selling. Chickens were patiently blinking up at their buyers from baskets where they were tied —or were carried, head down, by gesticulating purchasers.

One woman held in proffering gesture at arms' length, a hare, a yard-long animal, we had never seen except on the leap or a platter. It brought to mind the old query of the Oxford wag: " Is that your own or a wig? "

Over this gregarious mass on a monument stood a spirited, tightly queued figure in an ancient coat, keys behind him, of the mayor in Revolutionary days who refused entry to national troops. Breton true to his king, he cried: *Vive le roi!* and died with his keys in his hand.

These old Breton towns are treasure places for timber houses of the 1500's and 1600's. A search brought Rue Fardel to light, a sloping street with two-story houses, timbered and beamed, carved and balustered, rich with grotesques and pilasters. Tradition says James II of England lived in one when, wearied and worried by his enforced dependence on

THREE COIFS ON THE ROAD NEAR GUINGAMP

THE ISLE OF TOMBELAINE FROM THE HIGH FORTRESS GATE

Louis XIV, he planned an expedition to get back his throne.

So leaving St. Brieuc we were off for Guingamp thirty-four kilometres away, past mossy trees and orchards, lichened on the twigs, and more autumn cider making. In the villages the dark stone of the houses contrasted with the white of their mortar. Piles of brown furze marked the baker's house. Here the men had flat black hats tied under their chins with the brims rolled at the side and women were washing on their knees in dooryard puddles. One with whom we stopped to talk, looking at her flowers growing under the drip of the eaves, asked us into her house. Her one room had one iron-barred window, the door to the front and a way out at the back. The floor was bare earth, hard trodden and clean. Two fine armoires of dark brown oak, waxed and well-kept, stood against the back wall. Their long, gracefully cut escutcheons shone like gold in the room. A high-set oak table, long and narrow, topped with a three-inch oak plank, stood near the window, its top so set as to slide back and forth and allow a hutch below to be reached. Two long-legged benches of oak had rests for the feet and low backs of turned wood. The overhead beams showed and the whitewash was on the back of the unplastered outside stones. The fireplace was several inches above the floor and let out smoke into the room when the door stood open. In one corner a

built-in bed looked like those in remote corners of Scotland, with openwork doors which could be drawn shut, thus excluding the bed from the room. A yellow cat, an old dog, and a child hanging by her mother's skirt gave a homey air to it all, a sort of enduring sincerity like the heavy oak table. It was all going to go on for a very long time. On the fire a three-legged iron kettle, the *chaudière,*—our word chowder comes from that—had something good simmering in it. It may not have been the *poule* Henry IV wished for every peasant, but it was cooking slowly, savory and bountiful!

Past other thatched cottages with clothes drying on the hedges and women over their pools beating and bending and rinsing the wash—daily best expresses the roadside frequency of it—we saw tandem horses hauling from the barnyard to the fields for late plowing. Men were cutting furze with hooked blades, gathering it for fuel on undulating moorland valleys.

Guingamp was reached at noontime, a town that has a *pardon* when thousands come to the church of Bon Secours. We found dwarfs and little bent old women on the steps of the dusky, dark church that looked as if they, too, were part of the fourteenth century when the old carvings over their heads were made. There was a porch chapel on the open street where women knelt long with their baskets in front of them. Long were their reveries there in the

dusky shadows with the dwarfs at the door. A little pig in a poke was struggling and lurching in its prisoning sack while its owner made her devotions.

Outside the town, impelled by the idea there were a tremendous number of wooden shoes in the streets that day, we made a stop and looked over the tires. Three *clous* were sitting in the rubber like pins in a cushion. They had not yet pierced the *chambre d'air* and there was a sense of great triumph in finding them in time.

The day's route lay ahead to Lannion leaving, thus, the *Grand Chemin* we had been on for a much less frequented road. It proved not so wide, not so straight, but still had stone posts with advancing and receding kilometres.

Five foot walls which we saw to be made of layers of fibrous furze roots overlaid for centuries with mud from the ditch bordered our way, and trees like distorted green pillars. On the crest of a hill, a bagpipe player rested on the wall and skirled away, doleful and dirge-like, all alone. His black velvet ribbons drooped from his round hat and his wooden shoe tapped time. He had been called to play at a wedding and we hoped he could tune a merrier note, but here he seemed temperamentally to interpret the lonely quality of the brown and solemn moor, with his wailing notes.

Not far from where he sat, outlined against the sky, was a hamlet where the Bretons do superstitious

things on their knees, on a night in August, crawling under the altar and dipping in a pool, after which is a feast in the fields, when the summer world comes to stare at their sincerity and intensity.

So into Lannion with its fishing harbor facing the setting sun. Its broad quay had an air of welcome, but the one inn was out of business and the second evaded us. Up and down town streets we went and along the quay again. Dusk was settling, at last it was found with its entrance below the hill level, its front ancient, its staircase wavering, built in 1340 and an inn for all its time! Never did an old and ancient place busy itself more to offer comfort. The car was to go in the garage in the *ruelle* but this end was too narrow. If only we would enter by going around the quay to the other end, the host of the inn was sure it would go in. The other end of the alley was found. Two knobs of stone defended its mouth so that axles touched. The man stood waving his table napkin in triumph at an open door. A slight bulge in the alley, a cautious turn and with a cow and a new calf warm in the straw and a solemn watch-dog, there was just room for the night.

Dusk falls early in northern France in November and dinner is always at seven, so there are two good hours to stroll about, if a town is as interesting as Lannion. There was a *quincaillerie* window full of cooking contrivances, and a *vannerie* with baskets

much to be desired for gardening and another window of *faience* made not far away. There were old façades and abrupt little streets. There were surely a hundred fifteenth-century houses in Lannion, swelling out in top-heavy stories, one above the other in five heights, and trying through the centuries to maintain the perpendicular on a footing far from level. A superlative cake shop was a marvel to find in so small a town. Mushrooms of meringue put together with hard cream and dusted into verisimilitude with spice were being eaten, standing, by a group of French women. As we each ate two, each explained to the other it was hours since luncheon and hours to dinner!

A wide stone staircase led up, in the deepening dusk, to a broad terrace where an ancient church brooded over the town. A few lights were dimly burning under its solemn Norman arches. In a corner small boys were earnestly at practice for a song for Armistice day. On coming out the sky was bluey-green over the roofs, and the evening star hung over the quiet waters of the harbor.

The inn was gay with good cheer, and eight young Frenchmen ate and talked, gesticulated and laughed, for they were all going to see Charlot. It did not take long to learn that this was the name for him whose feet are as funny in France as in America—and this in a house built in 1340.

CHAPTER V

AUTUMN ON BRETON MOORS

EARLY in the morning bugles blew and soldiers went by at a quickstep. We backed the car gingerly into the narrow path, leaving the cow and the quiet dog. All the inn staff gathered in the *ruelle* to see *ces dames* depart and wave farewell. Their too modest charge had been a franc, then six cents, for housing the car.

We edged out between the bulging stones at the alley end and along the quay where shrewd-eyed old mariners with dark blue caps, *berets,* pulled out over their eyes, were sunning themselves on old posts and an anchor. On the headland of Trèbourden we were determined to find some famous menhirs, those great standing stones of prehistoric times. It is still believed that great treasure is buried beneath each stone and once a year, on St. Sylvestre's night, all the menhirs come to life and rush down to the sea to bathe. Knowing this, years and years ago, men hurried out at night and finding the menhirs gone they started to dig the gold. They were hard at it down in the pockets when the stones came rushing back and jumped in their holes again and all the men

were killed. No one since that day has ever touched a menhir!

Groups of black-dressed country people were solemnly going to church on foot and solemnly going in carts. We went down lanes and peered over hedges. We knocked at thatched cottages where only the dog was home and at last came to one village-surrounded menhir. By a lovely byway we went to the sea, down through villas to the spot where tradition says the menhirs ran to bathe. Two long quiet beaches were here, headland-bound at right and left, with stretches of pleasant turf and masses of rock looking like giants' blocks. Little boats were drawn up on the sand. On the hill in a farm field were three up-pointed stones like great fingers, the stones of the old tale. A lovelier spot in the warm sunshine, we thought we had never found. By the shore a little French girl of three in tiny yellow sabots came to us and said: "Good morning!" in English. Her father came up to say his daughter knew we were Americans! He had lived many years at Old Point Comfort. He was shy about telling of St. Sylvestre's night, but he had always heard it was true.

We turned from the quiet beauty of Trèbourden over a high plain where the sea shone glimmeringly. On this height as we were going past hedged fields of a sudden within a stone's throw of the road stood a giant stone, three times a man's height, in girth,

just four outstretchings of finger tips. Set there no man knows by whom, to watch the sea in the solitude. No wonder the Bretons leave them alone! That black stone had an awesomeness—a fear-producing quality.

Feeling that ours was, at last, just the most impressive of all menhirs, we descended an abrupt road into St. Michel—an often used name—to find an inn that offered a *langouste*—a spiny lobster of the shore and of delectable freshness. Our inn was shared by some strange-looking feasting wayfarers, who delighted us by squeezing the coffee filter for the last drop! They, too, were on the road and were peddler-caravaners with a traveling shop.

Beyond this village in its cleft by the sea we emerged on a semicircle of road, stone-walled, at water's level, where the sands under the green bluffs extended in a silver half-circle many miles, smooth and hard. A white line of surf and the blue sea was beyond, all lying in the embrace of two rocky headlands. White sea-gulls circled at the blue water line.

On this road so intimate with the sea, we passed a fine car which had jumped the wall and was *boule-versed*—a most expressive word—in ruin, wheels in air. A steep, sheltered ravine led ahead, full of cuddled cottages in gardens of bamboo, with flame-like tritomas, fifty of them at once, in blossom in November. Then came the open moorland again

with continuous sod walls so neatly bespread with short turf that they looked like the long sod seats of some extravagant-minded gardener, but were only grass-grown walls nibbled by cows.

Lanmeux seemed stirred over something, for its square at the church door was buzzing in expectancy. Stakes were being induced to penetrate into the hard stones of the road by the energy of twenty men, all dressed in holiday clothes. It was a great gathering of flat black hats with silver buckles at the back and four long streamers down to their shoulder blades. They had strange waistcoats with much black velvet, and coat tails, short, round and full. We drew in at the side of the road and asked what it was going to be. "Games," we were told, "*Sports.*" Breton games—we had heard of their fêtes and feats. Again we made demands from those in the skirts of the crowd when it was to begin and what it was to be. A free-for-all bicycle race from Morlaix we were told, and they might be in any moment. Now, a Breton on a bicycle did not inspire us to wait. It was better to meet them on the road. Mothers and fathers, children and babies were on the sod walls waiting for the race. Groups sat at cottages, lovers sat in rows, old men stood with staffs and old women knitted, waiting for the race as we went toward Morlaix, round twists in the descent up which we were sure we should meet the pedalers! The road was park-like into the ravine of

the *Rivière de Morlaix,* with a town-owned forest of glorious trees. Great ships of the sea, English, Norwegian and French, were lying in the tidal river, in the shadow of the heights of Morlaix and equally near the park-forest.

In front of us, high across the ravine, stretched a thousand feet of stone arches. Almost under this bridge, we saw the deep river at our side and drove into a wide *place* named Emile-Souvestre in honor of him who writes of the legends of Brittany—and the river was gone! We were in the *basse ville,* the low town of Morlaix. Where had that big river gone? Getting out of the car to understand this magic we realized that all those poor Bretons were still standing, craning and waiting for the race which had not yet started. The river forms here by the confluence of others and this stone-paved *place* rests on vaulting under which the waters are completely out of sight—a public square on top of a river.

A fountain called " of the English " marked where six hundred marauders in Henry VIII's time were caught napping and killed. It seemed recent in a valley too beautiful for tragedy. After a look about the high-town of Morlaix, we found ourselves traveling north quite parallel to the road by which we had entered but in the other direction with only the steep-quayed channel between. The steamers and vessels were shut in by gates while all the craft outside were tipped over in beds of mud.

Here and there a prosperous home hung like a barn swallow's nest on the cliff. We left this road which went on to the sea at the first lateral opportunity, and rose quickly with a sweep through a heath and vale through St. Pol. In the twilight we made a ridge ride through artichoke and tobacco fields down to Roscoff on the sea.

Roscoff is surely the queerest little town in France! Centuries ago there was a forge on a rock at a harbor mouth, for ship-irons.

The blacksmith "on the sands" acquired neighbors desirous of escaping taxes and severity. They built a circle of great stone houses, backs to the sea and in the water, but with fronts set on the open rock, handy for a call to arms, for they were terrible fighters. On this they put their church and their dead.

Roscoff prospered. It had merchants and sailors, not fishermen. It was a port a little given to freebooting, but always spirited. Its houses are old and solid and beautiful, with armorial bearings and great stone mullions.

We established ourselves in a small hotel with the car under an apple shed behind the kitchens. A new hotel this, but preserving on its attic the *jolie fenêtre* of the sixteenth-century house it had replaced. How we did want to get someone to talk who knew all about Roscoff! The mistress of the inn told us there was only one man who knew, the

curé, and she dispatched a maid at once to tell him. He asked us to his house before we had dinner.

We sat in his cold little parlor with its rigid circle of armchairs and discoursed of his town. How he loved it! a new house was anathema to him! the hotel an offence. What would bring everybody, *tout le monde,* to Roscoff if the old ones were pulled down and new put up? "I ask you?" Had we seen their *jolie fenêtre?*—They had put it up again to save their face! We could visualize the salvage of that stone frame from the indignation of the curé, still hot after ten years! The line of new villas, and tamarisk gardens beyond, on the beach, simply didn't exist in his Roscoff. Marie Stuart was a live, little child to him, a queen landing from her galleon on his rocks—resting with the sisters, building them a votive chapel. Jacques Deuxième—a king of England to us—was a gentleman out of suits with fortune who had lived down a lane where now his sacristan lived—we should be shown it in the morning. Young Prince Charlie—we fairly thought he might be looking in the window!

The house by his chancel with lordly armorial bearings and carved doorways? It was manifest the owner's pedigree was not long enough. Bretons are stiff in their judgment of family. They had bought the house! Though I am sure he said this offence had been committed in the 1700's! And one of their marvelous old renaissance carvings had been super-

imposed on a plain doorway. An irrelevant thought of how one would have to confess: "Oh, Father, my mantelpiece is not original—it came from another old house!" came flashing to mind but we were off again on the fifteenth-century alabaster panels in the church and the charnel houses now used for catechism classes, a transposition he had affected! The curious mild air of Roscoff with never a frost, here at the north of France—he bowed to us as if we were American proprietors of the Gulf Stream—here the artichokes for Paris are raised and *primeurs* for the tables of the rich.

Little and mild and old he looked as he stood with his lamp at the door when we left. There never was such a defender of the faith, a man so militant for the glories and antiquities of his parish. They have a nice proverb here in France. *A chaque oiseau son nid est beau*—to each bird his nest is fine. He made his so to us. We could hardly wait for daylight to get out to see it all.

The curé's church snuggled, low roofed, under fine elms all enclosed in a wall and with cottage-like stone ossuaries in the front wall corners, each arcaded in openwork. It has long been a curious custom of the country to stack the dry bones for the judgment day in such charnel houses near their churches.

Above the tall elms rose the church tower of Roscoff built before Marie Stuart's day, a tower of onion

minarets as if some navigator had seen such in his voyages or did hold the gorgeous East in fee. The walls between the Gothic windows repeated the coat of arms of Roscoff, a high-sterned galleon with a crowding sail.

In amazement we saw at our feet on the pavement as much as a wagon load of round stones, orange-sized, intermingled with kelp and seaweed, all in an inpoured curve. A narrow passageway between the houses had a wet, washed look. Every night the sea comes up and hurls stones in the streets! We came to a roofless stone chapel, the thank offering of Marie Stuart, when, five years old, she landed in her dear France, already Queen of Scotland, betrothed to the future King of France, and lawful Queen of England in the eyes of every Catholic in Europe.

Roscoff projecting far north was a favorite Stuart point of approach from Scotland when England harried the sea. These landings on Breton soil were not small affairs. James II brought in twenty-five thousand in his famous Irish brigade which existed in name to the French Revolution.

One hundred and ninety-eight years after Marie Stuart, the young Pretender made a different entry at this rocky harbor, last of his line to try for his crown,—all the tragedy of Culloden behind him, he came in from the Hebrides, hunted and haunted to the same sheltering France—sixth of his line from

her who built the little chapel and no crowns left of the heritage.

The curé sent us, and we went up, on a winding solid wood stair in a turret, to King James' lodging, a square room with board walls, on which were painted a mural landscape of Scotch firs, great hills and the palace of Holyrood.

Had King James beguiled his waiting—he was always waiting—by telling the painter what his lost kingdom was like? Here were Highlanders and hunters and green trees, around the palace of his forefathers, in this rock-set Breton town where the sea comes in the night and hurls stones.

After this Jacobite romance we turned back past a famous fig tree and many artichokes, silvery green and fern-like, to St. Pol de Leon, another stone town, mellow and mustard-lichened, where in the old hotels of nobles, the cobblers and bakers worked under coats of arms and spouting gargoyles. It had a church called the Creizker, which sounded as if it might be in Poland, but Breton is still a living tongue bristling with consonants. It had a stone tower of openwork visible far over the land. While the cathedral, not to be outdone and dating, too, from the fourteenth century, had two towers and places, one where the bishop came out to bless and another made for his maledictions.

The November day was vibrant with sunshine. We sought the southwestern highway to Brest, fifty

kilometres away, a road out into the open country through green, green meadows with furze-covered walls, bristling in spiky prohibition to cow's noses; a road undulating gently around great hills where it lay visible in ten-mile sweeps before us, now mastering some contour, now crossing a seagoing valley.

All the birds were out in the sun assembling for a southern migration and we recalled Châteaubriand's list, *l'hirondelle, l'oriot, le coucou, la caille, et le rossignol*—the swallow, the oriole, the cuckoo, the quail and the nightingale. There was a lively top-knotted, olive-green bird that sat in the road time after time, and flirted away at the last moment in taunting gayety.

The stone cottages now all had only one iron-barred window, and depended on the door for light, for France still taxes her windows and Bretons are very thrifty. There were sun-dials on the churches: *"Craignez les dernier"*—surely a frightful one to ask the sun to mark! "Fear the last!" Another had difficult pronouns: *"Me lumen vos umbra regit."*

Lesneven was on the way over the moors to Brest, remaining in mind because a young French woman with her baby greeted us as we ate at the inn. She had read the license on the car. She hadn't seen an American since the soldiers went home! Her eyes sparkled as she told us a camp had been on her mother's farm; she had learned to speak there. "They were good to us," she said; "they gave us

A Menhir on the Headland Near Lannion

The Newfoundland Fleet at St. Malo

ROADSIDE COTTAGES IN BRITTANY

A DOORYARD IN BRITTANY

bread when we had none and helped my mother plough."

As we went on again we saw an old woman sitting in an opening in a hedge, holding in her left hand a distaff, long the symbol of women. Still and intent she sat while the flax-formed thread twirled through her thumb and finger. We looked over a wide horizon where the American camps had been so few years ago in the deep mud of trampled fields, the rainiest neighborhood in France, with a record of 205 wet days a year. Down a straggling, drawn-out street of minor shops, debating the way with high-set street-car tracks and home-going farm carts, we entered Brest, through gates in the fortifications, on a street still running down hill.

Brest is a naval port facing south under a chin of land, a fortress since the days of Richelieu and Vauban. Great grass-banked stone-based walls, somewhat softened in outline by elms, girdle the city. Its thoroughfare is the steadily descending Rue de Siam, leading far down to the port. All the city is livened by the red-topped caps and blue collars of men of the navy, by the uniforms of officers and that of the orphan boys of France who are trained in the naval schools, as well as black troops in red fezzes. A uniform is on more than half the men in town.

Never was there such a city for clothes and shoe shops; they stretched for miles. Does all the world come into port in need of clothes, we wondered?

CHAPTER VI

BREST TO QUIMPER

STENDHAL says: The evening so *amiable* in Paris is the *penable* part of traveling, so his memorist fell back on Cæsar's Commentaries—a French subject after all. Seeing placards of an opera down from Paris, we seized the opportunity to vary our quiet evenings, but the audience was more interesting than La Tosca. Four-fifths were men. Many were officers in white gloves, greatly bored. There were few young women and no girls.

Next morning we were off down the Rue de Siam. France strangely adheres to her Oriental names though now her eastern colonies are few. We did not see Quebec or Canada or even Micquelon anywhere as a name though we had been asked about the Canadian woods and the farms and the snow, a revival of interest due to the vogue of the idyllic story of Marie Chapdelaine. From this story the French have had a sense of loss of what might have been theirs in time of need—the peasants of Quebec.

Their *Pont Tournant* is a source of Brestois pride. Its quivering frame has been there sixty years, light

to the point of fragility, paved in braided rope. It overhangs a basin imbedded in a great concavity of engine shops and naval stores and barracks, and a gate where seven thousand enter daily for government work.

A departing officer, at the fortress, summoned a fezzed Turco to take us to the *casernier*. It was an opportunity to find what these fezzed Africans spoke and we asked him several questions but he stalked ahead as if walking a jungle path. He mounted a high stone stair, pounded on a door, saluted, stalked away in dead silence.

The buoyant little *casernier* was not silent. He lived on the top of the tower with his wife and two pretty young daughters. They had a garden and caged chickens and rabbits. When he, by mind-reading, I am sure, decided we were Americans he called them all out to share in his delight. His wife led us to see the great outer harbor from her tower vantage, with miles of dancing, sparkling water, land-locked from the ocean. "One day during the war I stood here and counted sixty-seven American ships there in that water, and we in Brest will never forget how the men came ashore from those ships, like sardines from a net, they poured out on that wharf."

Her vivid words filled all the dancing water with dark grey ships. The quiet quays swarmed again with strong men, facing east. When we turned from

the water into their little roof garden her girls had cut their only flowers from a purple shrub that we might have bouquets.

Locking his family in, with a key of enormous size, taking no chances with a barracks full of fezzes—he set forth to show us the towers set on foundations built by the Romans with masonry and cement to convince. They were topped with Vauban's cannon emplacements, long considered impregnable. A liver-colored, short-haired and short-tailed dog padded with us, a humorous beast brought home from the trenches, who carried the keys and had little jokes with his master, and friendly sniffs for us.

Up a centuries-old tower over *oubliettes* set with poniards and over deep-caverned wells where the sea washed in for its victims, there ascended a stone turnpike stair with whitewashed walls, opening on a far-sweeping view. On these white walls close, high, low, everywhere were penciled names, boldly written, from Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Waukesha, Sleepy Eye, Duluth—not Roland's sword could give a greater thrill.

We hurried to the bank before the closing hour. On a great paper headed *Bordereau* reminiscent of Esterhazy and Dreyfus, they wrote prodigiously with a slim, scratchy pen, and stamped and toiled and made quite an afternoon's work of a very small transaction, so that, the day gone, we loitered about the city and found an old ivory box and a miniature

and resolved to be early on the road in the morning. We were told of a good road to Landerneau at the small end of an estuary, avoiding a primitive *bac*.

Often approaching a height we saw a steep, rocky road scrambling up to its summit but on nearing we always found a newer road around the hill, instead of over it. The country, almost treeless here, seemed lovelier than on the north of Britanny, in its browns and deep greens. A long ribboned man, who rode a bicycle, in huge wooden shoes, came by. Another old woman was twirling her flax from a distaff. The rustic simplicity of flocks and herds was broken by one great estate where eight hundred beech trees, each more than a foot through the bole, made a sylvan avenue.

At the narrowing end of the estuary of the Elorn we descended to the waterside, and Landerneau. It was built on arches across the river and with the river boiling out of these arches under its busy, cramped confusion of cloth mills and houses. Toward Quimper the road turned back on the opposite bank of the river until opportunity to get up on the moors offered. The hills rose here from tidewater seven hundred and fifty feet—not a great height to be sure, but between each headland the road descended and was always at tidewater again, at a river bridge.

The headlands south of Landerneau had thin trees in thickets enough to be marked as woods on the

map. Our fairy tale, the homely one of the fireside, Little Red Riding Hood, *Petite Cap Rouge,* is a tale of the talking wolves of this lonely wild, of few houses, of gorse and heather.

Three hunters passed us on wheels, their guns slung diagonally across their backs, a quail head showing in their coat folds. On one summit we looked away to the south and had a panoramic view of blue-hazed mountains on the horizon, before we descended to Doulas on its narrow in-pointing estuary. Women were walking, knitting in the sun, watching their cows feeding along the roads. Here was a manor, centuries old, lichened into deep yellow, buried in gloomy pines. Its blue slate roof, tip-tilted in ancient grace, rose from trees and walls and ground, all smothered in sombre-leaved English ivy.

In another deep cleft, lonely too, we came upon a government powder factory set with pyramids of cannon balls. Explosives could find a harbor at the foot of every hill.

Dejeuner was over by an hour and more when we came to a village and inn. There was nothing but bread and meat—which didn't sound half bad to us. Fearing a terrible delay should they begin cooking for us, we asked if they would let us have some to take away. Entering into our idea they produced a sharp knife and we cut *trenches* of bread and meat. They had never seen a sandwich! With two rusty, succulent pears and a slice of *gruyère* cheese, we

went on to a pleasant place and ate in great luxury. Like Gil Blas, "to stop dilapidation, we renewed ourselves by a breakfast from our wallet." As we ate, a great Percheron was frightened into eye-rolling terror at our car. His driver assured us he would pass if we moved. So being at the end of the pears, we obliged the eye-rolling quadruped and went on our way to La Faou.

Neck-arching, shiny-coated horses were being led as if for a sale. An old stone bridge arched the flood and a mossy nine-gabled stone church sat in a tide-side churchyard. All the sailboats were stranded in the empty estuary. Its bygone air overwhelmed us. We twisted up the narrowness of the village street to encounter an American tractor with the villagers in a queue watching its manœuvers!

The road rose over the back-bone of Brittany into Basse-Bretagne, sloping to the south. There were high valleys after Châteaulin, first in France to have electric lights. Out of its quiet streets went the Admiral Cosmao who did his best for French glory against Nelson at Trafalgar.

The railroad on its way to Quimper mastered the valleys by a series of seven lofty stone bridges. Like Roman aqueducts, high-arched in the green valleys, they were a paradox to American eyes, a beautiful railroad.

At Quilinen we drove by its famous sixteenth-century *calvaire,* an outdoor praying place where a

dozen or more holy statues were piled high in air on pillar and post, assembled on one great stone base, many feet above the heads of the pious, prayer-saying people.

A change in landscape marked the long descent to Quimper. The moors were gone and it was now a wooded country, with unclipped trees, shapely and natural. Though we had appreciated the fantastic growth of trees growing under yearly sawing and shearing, these trees had a beauty stronger than the novelty of distortion.

It was after dusk that we came searching in along fifteenth-century streets, driving slowly, our lights on, the horn tooting, for half Quimper's population were on the pavements. We looked for the hotel on its river-facing thoroughfare, in the mental glow that comes to a traveler when he finds he has just escaped a heavy rain.

The garage space was reached through the main archway of the hotel between potted shrubs, green tables and departing baggage. Under a glass-roofed shed stood eight cars with only one space left against the far wall. Five volunteering men waved their arms. One gestured "stop" another "advance." One wildly motioned for a right turn, yet another insisted on left. The fifth made marks on the floor and finally grabbed at the front wheels. All the while a wood-sawyer made erratic and intermittent screeches with a buzz-saw. All went well until an

unseen tub of apparent white sand and water tipped over. Whereupon everyone assured us it was nothing, nothing at all. We got out into the white sand to find our shoes sinking into dissolved salt fish whose fragrance long followed our footsteps.

There are some hotels and some towns that say: "Better stay two or three days!" We had time before six to walk through waterwayed streets, some very dark and some well lighted, along two-foot sidewalks where our elbows rubbed the door-handles. We went along narrow streets without sidewalks at all, past butcher shops barred from ceiling to floor, open to the air. A school door opened in the dark and forty small boys of eight to ten debouched with a clatter of wooden shoes, enlivening the street with a few Celtic yells. Though happy sounds, we were reduced thereby to the sign language. Finally we came to the post-office, housed in a suppressed convent and found the welcome manila envelopes in which our letters were sent on to us from Paris week by week, to the *Poste Restante* of the city we expected to reach.

Quimper appealed strongly with its three rivers, a running stream in front of most of its streets, or curved behind whole rows of houses and tourelles, bebridged in beauty by every street. All the rivers seemed to sing as they went—there was no sluggish water, all three streams had a gayety, a sort of dancing life.

Quimper, whose second syllable is sounded in a good tongue-rasping r–r–r, is a Breton word for the meeting of waters. The third river is attained by counting the two branches and their confluent. It is their way of counting, just as the *premier etage* may land one on the third floor after *rez-de-chaussée* and *entresol* are counted out!

In the night, the purl and roar of the river pent in its stone-walled bed under the window of the hotel wakened us with thoughts of a storm, but the night was clear with a slender moon, skimming through the park-like woods in the opposite bank, overlooking the city. It silvered the quiet esplanade and the turreted prefecture just across the stream and made shadows under the avenued plane trees up and down the river. Down the quiet street at one in the morning there came a churr of feet, as a newly-arrived squad of young lads, ununiformed, with scant baggage, swung past. They looked very young facing their military service as the sentineled gate of the *caserne* swallowed them, in the night.

The morning was Sunday and the day was bright. All the costumes we could wish to see were on the streets, on the young girls and old women, the country youths and the men. Everyone was loitering in the sun; the women bound either to or from the cathedral, which dominated any view you might take of old Quimper with its great bulk and twin towers of tall, pointed openwork. Every cap was stiff and

white. Every girl had a black dress, velvet bordered and banded, full skirted, with tight and pointed bodice. There were gay aprons of silk, tall caps like a bishop's miter, square ones with tails, round ones with bands under the chins, each one atop a lively, sparkling face. There was not a rude, rough girl among them all, not a self-conscious one—they made us wish costume ruled all the world.

As a famous French memorist says—"my affairs terminated and the wind being cold I sought refuge in the cathedral." Quimper had a cold wind, so we went in, passing old women within the portal selling licorice and hot chestnuts. A murmurous service was going on in the choir which curiously crooked off from the straight axis of the church. Soft lights fell from beautiful windows over the black dresses and white caps bent in prayer and over a row of nuns in soft white robes and with dark scarfs around their necks, nuns who are working nurses in the community now the laws have suppressed their convent. The centuries-old church, filled with a sense of repose and peace, sombre and grey-green in tone, was illumined by the presence of a very huge man in a scarlet robe, a full, flowing, brilliant, broadcloth coat to his heels! More dazzling than Richelieu, he was like the king's headsman of old. I expected to see his axe. But Quimper has always so robed its sacristan. It is in a scene such as this that a phrase in the Memoires d'un

Touriste fits: "The Bretons are a people of the fourteenth century."

Quimper with its six riversides, its people dressed to suit their environment, its sunshiny air, seemed to us the heart and soul of all Brittany. The very names of the streets and the way they were marked had individuality. One was Rue de Gradlon and below in small letters "King of Is." Legend to us, this is reality to Quimper, where to them the king walks arm in arm in their streets, his city, with good St. Corentin, his friend, him who made Quimper Christian a thousand years ago and in whose honor they still add stones to his cathedral. The great pair of spires that rises over all the gabled streets and all the fabled riverside were only put on in 1850.

Another street was Tour d'Auvergne and underneath *le premier grenadier de France*—shot in 1800, not a remote hero; he, too, was of this land and walked these streets. The market-place, where fine old houses cluster as if to look down on it, is *Terre au Duc,* remindful to them of the time the Duc and the bishop fell out and for peace drew a line through the town.

At our quiet hotel called "of the Sword" thirty guests sat down to dinner while eight men and two costumed maids went through the ancient ceremony of serving. One bore in the cook's offering to a central serving table. The whole room waited. The proprietor beamed; the master-waiter inspected; the

server carved; the waiters carried. The cellarer in green apron, with a square-caged basket and a ring of keys stood ready for orders. He descended and reappeared with dusty trophies. The maids served bread and achieved the decorative.

We went out next morning to see the famous Quimper pottery made. Gulls, town pets, were flying and sitting evenly spaced, all in profile, facing down-stream, on an iron balustrade. Having web feet they were standing, not perching, and not being able to grasp the rail, placed their feet on its length, exactly where they settled, each with space for rising on the wing. So, a yard apart, they sat, and the rail was steely bare from the wear of their pink feet.

Truly renowned is the peasant ware of Quimper, appreciated for its color and simplicity. Evidently a bitter rivalry exists between the two *fabriques* fanned by the possession, or non-possession, of medals and by the date of their founding. The first one comfortably settled under the hillside, said founded in 1770—a very satisfactory age, but the other claimed the extinguishing, vanquishing date of 1420.

The clay was local but mixed with a little from Limoges. It was squeezed in bags in a machine of accordion-like action. These bags were then carried upstairs, where in simple surroundings the plates and jugs and little bowls were either molded or made on the potter's wheel. Old men, like magicians, made

great jugs rise like enchantments under their long sinuous fingers. They lifted a jug to the drying shelf and leaned out and pinched it with three fingers—and there was a perfect spout on the jug.

The ware was burned in segars, in square-cornered kilns, with fires of beech and birch. Masses of fagots were used for the first flare. We met a man with a narrow plank on his head set with twenty great jugs walking downstairs with an unconcerned air. The passageways were dark, the stairs steep. Old women with white hair, blooming girls in peasant costume, little girls of thirteen, painted the plates after dusting color over a perforated outline. A girl in a cap like a square-rigged ship, with a ruff like Queen Elizabeth's court ladies and with slashed sleeves, went by. The inspiration for the picturesque ware of Quimper is at their windows as they paint. At neither pottery could anything be bought. The town abounded, however, in little retail shops which sold the rivals' products on the same counter.

Thirteen highways came cobwebbing into Quimper. We went twenty kilometres south on one, through ferny banks, past green, velvety-mossed roofs, past men with high crowned hats with silver buckles on them and blue, clean smocks, playing skittles. We saw girls with coifs with six flying white tails on them. Thus we came to Pont l'Abbé, where the *Bigoudens* live, a pre-Celtic race supposed to be Spanish, Phœnician, or even oblique-eyed, a

short, squat, queer folk. The men wore gay embroidered garments like roundabout coats, rich with orange-colored embroidery and the women were gay in strong colors, orange or yellow. This was very marked where the whole of Brittany wore black. The women's hair was combed high, smooth and plain up from their necks to within two inches of the forehead. It disappeared under a ten-inch-high white cap like a bishop's mitre, but cylindrical. This perched headgear stood, fresh, white, stiff and erect, in rain and wind. The Bigoudens must learn the secret early for we saw quaint little maidens of ten in these caps playing on the old bridge by the castle tower. We drove around the narrow stony streets and saw more little tight-waisted, costumed girls and went in the stone-paved church, empty and open, with a clock solemnly ticking. The pulpit hung like an oriole nest. And on the wall were the hundred and fourteen names, Jean and Jacques, Yves and Alain, René and Harvé, six of one family name, seven of another, five and four, *héros de Pont l'Abbé*—gone from their velvet ribbons and their orange coats and the girls in white caps on the bridge.

Pen-March lay on beyond, nearer the open sea. There was more color, more old world customs and costumes, but with the strongest and most modern light in the world in its lighthouse. On the way home girls were knitting in the sun as they walked, with their tight little waists and full skirts yards and

yards around, each topped off with the cap of her village. They looked as if they could be moved like pawns on a chessboard, by their heads. Sometimes we saw grandmother put out for the day to watch the cows. When it rained she crept under a hedge—but without spoiling her headgear!

We loitered in a deserted ecclesiastical gazebo, above the worldly streets of Quimper, the garden of a museum now. The antiquary opened his lonely heart to us. Only ten people in a year looked appreciatively at his things. The last was an architect from Boston who had no French. It was very sad. He poked us gently on the shoulders in his enthusiasm over Gothic coffers and over tombs dragged in from distant parishes with knights in armor, sleeping in effigy. Their stony hair was brushed out over their cheeks like Mme. de Sévigné's. Probably they were cronies of hers when she visited her château of Les Rochers in Bretagne.

Happy to find sharers in his enthusiasm the curator told us about a fire which burned the roof off the palace but not the grand staircase which wouldn't burn. All this was six centuries ago but we had to go with him to see the mends and changes after the fire.

CHAPTER VII

THE TIP OF FINISTÈRE

IN promising sunshine we started to the westernmost tip of France, the Pointe du Raz and the Bay of Tréspassés, both on the end of Finistère. England has a Land's End and France another, Finistère, names for their westernmost headlands coming down from the days when the earth was believed flat.

Everybody, *toute le monde* was coming into Quimper that forenoon; leading ponies, leading pink pigs, sitting high on two-wheeled carts, two and three on a seat. Velvet ribbons were flying, coifs bobbing. Carts were in groups of seven or eight as if they had started and kept together. All were full with butter baskets and small produce. We met the carts in climbing a fifteen kilometre hill toward Douarnenez. Through dark pines and yellow-blossoming gorse, again we were near the sea, but at a town set high above its inlet. There was an ideal place to look down at the sardine boats and all the attendant industry. The fishermen in Douarnenez walked the streets in rose-pink trousers and round coats of rough linen. Hardly had we grasped this astonishing color when a group of men clad in brilliant ochre,

with black felt hats pulled out over their eyes, came by, striding along in flat wooden shoes of great size. Why should men always wear sombre hues? In Douarnenez they blossomed as the rose, not one, not ten, but a whole town of them, lighting up the street with their brilliance.

We gazed down to see a boat load of sardines—the town record is two million tins a year—a silvery tonnage handled by rose-pink men. An ochre group would have been ochre and silver. The imagination reaches out for such a color combination. But a squall came in from the angry sea. We sought shelter in the car and ran before the wind out of the rain.

The children were playing at the crossroads, at Comfort, where stood the best *Calvaire* we saw in all Brittany, a great outside stone shrine, high-set, surmounted by a cross and a score of statued saints. All the road was the kneeling place.

Hard living was all we saw in this country, with only sheep pastures on the land. At Pont Croix we turned in to see an old abbey whose famous great tower had five centuries of age to its credit and was the model in double duplicate for the towers in Quimper. This bit of architectural wisdom on the part of the bishop in 1850 fixed on Quimper the reputation of being the finest cathedral in Brittany and he built them by a collection of *sous*.

The headland of Finistère narrows toward solemn-

named Tréspassés—departed souls. We came into Audierne, with broad quays, blue water and many yawls manned by standing rowers. Long, sky-blue seines were garlanded from pegs to dry in the sun. There were knots and groups of old mariners and fishermen—one is never confused with the other. They all had shrewd, seafaring eyes and were clad in bright ochre linen and had trouser legs as big as skirts.

A *tambour de ville,* the town crier, was rolling his lively drum and calling out an auction. We ate in a glassed-in terrace and saw the auction and when we started the car, which had been standing on the quay, two old ochre-clad men came from basking in the sun to tell us how to get on the bridge. They wanted to talk and have news to tell their cronies. One would get his shoulders in the window and the other would say: "sh-sh" to him and pull him out. Then in would come another blue beret and he would gallantly tell us the turns to take. No wonder they talked of the narrow bridge at the wide harbor river. The wheels of the car could just enter the roadway. Our running boards overhung the beams which stoutly bounded the strait and narrow way. We were told not to enter if anyone was coming the other way. But supposing someone came—the thought kept us on the move.

Wind-driven hills looked down upon the sea. The distorted oaks and the flat-topped pines grew fewer.

A squat, square tower with a dome on it, St. Tugen's, was strange enough, lying down by the sea, to belong to the mythical land of Is.

Bleak windmills, bare armed, stood on low cones, outlined against the sky. Trees ceased. We came to a sandy beach where strong, black-capped women and ochre-clad men were gathering seaweed. They carried the slippery, yellow, ribbon-like weed, heavy and sodden, on stretchers to carts, fighting with the sea for fertility for their fields.

Advancing on the headland, a few sheep sheltered in small fields behind intricate stone walls, monuments of toil, patterning the green fields. The bare houses cowered close to the green earth singly or in wind-driven hamlets. They had strong quoins up the edges and along their gables. Stones, like reversed corbels, were laid over the slates to hold them down in the piping wind. These low cottages had no windows and their doors were on the side away from the sea. The stones of their wells were chained down. A high lighthouse and a wireless station, whose great frame lay prone, crushed into the earth, were on the cliff.

This was Tréspassés, the legended lonely end of the earth; the place of the dead. The road stopped. It was Finistère.

Underfoot, the spongy green looked like grass but it was dwarfed furze. We beat our way to the edge of the cliff and saw the ever-driving surf and the

Champtocé: Bluebeard's Castle

The Plantagenet Bridge at Chinon

A Turn in the Road at the Church of Pont-Croix

snarling waves. Two low lighthouses were on spray-hidden rocks, beyond the white area of breakers which shimmered and spread, gathering and breaking in terrible and terrifying impulses. At our feet hollowed caverns in the rock moaned and echoed. Far at the right was a foaming sea, and close in,—a bay of white sand beaten by cruel surf. This is the most feared and dreaded coast in Europe for those in peril of the sea; the coast of the Breton prayer: "Help us, our boat is so small; the sea is so great." It covers the land of Is which sank into the sea, where legended church bells ring under the waves, where a king's daughter left the sea-gate open for a lover.

The shelter of the car was a haven to us, breathless and deafened by the wind. Again we went past the stone walls lying like twisted chains thrown upon the green ground, past Plozevet, a cottaged street with shops for bare necessities. It had a statue of a Breton, just a sad, quiet old man with his hat off beside a long bronze list of names.

The long road back brought us into the trees again, and then into a land of mossy, lichened orchards. We had the excitement of seeing an armoire of Louis XV's time on a woodpile and a carved oak bed-end fronting a pig-pen. The carts were returning from Quimper. Two women, covered head and all with blankets to keep off the wind, sat like upright bundles beside their men. At one tavern fifteen

horses stood, noses in, carts out, while their owners were inside.

Again putting our bags on the running boards we started for the southeast to Beg-Meil and Concarneau. Climate shows a gentle side in this south-facing coast of Brittany, and we journeyed to Le Foret, through fantastic woods shining with holly. There were grotesque knots of tree stumps covered with English ivy and rich pine woods and oaks still full with leaves. The roads became narrow lanes near Beg-Meil and one stretch was sunken between abrupt banks feathery with ferns. A mother and two little toddlers were all three gowned and coifed alike. A man was thatching a roof that had a wooden chimney. We passed a group of fairy-tale cottages, romantic and pictorial, flowery and bosky, almost make-believe in their loveliness. At Beg-Meil there were wooded sand dunes and forty sail-boats on the quiet sea. Great blocky rocks were loose upon the shore.

Even the hotels were bowered in climbing roses and had shiny magnolias and camellias in their gardens. The green distortions of araucarias showed their writhing branches over garden walls. It was the verdure of the tropics.

Here we ate in an inn with a floor sanded in flourishes and patterned sweeps. Our coffee was made over a handful of twigs crackling under a copper pot. Thinking more of the sanded floor and the

eight kinds of roses in blossom than of our route, we soon saw we were on a byroad, but it settled two points for us. There are thousands of men in Brittany who, even after years of army service, can speak no French. Here we found two men who were helpless at our queries, though manifestly desirous to answer. They had to fetch a young sister who could speak French. The second point was—we had wondered over it often—were these elaborate, immaculate coifs worn in their homes on workaday occasions? Out came two girls from this remote house. Each had her coif as perfect as on a Sunday in Quimper, but her apron was dark and heavy, not the gay one of display.

From this balmy coast we journeyed on along roads reddened by blood-colored seaweed dropped from field-going carts, through Foesnant and its bridge. Thus we came around a very curved bay to Concarneau, where carts were shaped like boats, reminiscent of Conestogas, and other carts were half circles of wood as if made of great staves. It was a rosy paradise in November.

Concarneau was the scene of Blanche Howard's Guenn—that we all used to read, the sad story of a little white coif and the artist taking hearts as well as pictures in his summer's stay. The artists were still sketching. Concarneau has long outgrown its *ville close,* rampart-bound that sits flat on a rocky islet in the bay. It is now bridged firmly to the

shore. They used to fight murderously there with terrible records of a whole English garrison put to the sword. Du Guesclin did that and yet he was the man who, dying, urged his comrades ever to show mercy to the old, the women and the children. Evidently his quality of mercy did not extend to the "*Anglais.*" With another siege the walls were completely worn out and Anne de Bretagne ordered them rebuilt. She seems to have gone around her coast strengthening her bulwarks. When the Huguenots and the Leaguers were busy with each other, all were stabbed after surrender. Very peacefully the walls of the islet lay in the blue bay. The air was balmy and flowers and white-capped girls were everywhere.

At the foot of a shady, parked hill, the sort betokening an approach to an old mansion, stood a statue of a man. He had the great sagging boots that look most difficult to walk in, of the 1680's, a great peruke and voluminous coat. A speaking trumpet was in his hand, a little suggestive of a fireman's muster but here showing an admiral's right to a loud voice. It was Admiral Du Quesne, a name not unknown in one great American city. Granted a marquisate for his valor in defeating the Dutch under De Ruyter, he had a rarer distinction in being the sole Huguenot exempted from the Edict which expelled every Protestant from France. It was he who courageously answered Louis XIV's direct

query with: "Sire, I am a Huguenot; but my victories have had no creed."

Each old stone bridge on the south coast of Brittany was the nucleus of a town such as the next one, Pont-Aven. The valleys had grown abrupt, much like ravines. In five of them we saw small groups of thatched roofs, mossy like the fields, under the level of the modern road and with no wheel path leading to them, survivals of pack-horse and foot-path days.

Just one hundred kilometres brought us from Quimper to Quimperlé. We were looking for a picturesque town and went on a hill where the church was perched like a scared hen on a pinnacle. Finding no place up there to stay we descended an utterly impossible road, on assurance it was *facile,* a road still slippery from a rain. Once down by the river's brim there we proposed to stay. The square tower where we had been was above us, almost at the zenith. We had the happy thought to search for a convent which proved to be on the river's bank just past a double row of clipped *tilleuls.* It was entered by an arch centuries old. The car stayed the nights under a cedar of Lebanon, with the moon overhead, in the quiet of a garden enclosed.

There was a great fluttering over us in the convent. Only one lamp *functioned.* A candle was offered, fitting in an old convent. It took two to light the candle. They at once decided I was very

tired from driving. There were two hours before dinner. They tucked me in bed and blew out the candle and tiptoed off down the echoing corridor—with the matches!

The bare floored room was peaceful. The little fireplace was closed with a pictured saint. The bed was snowy. The bare washing table had a big bottle marked cognac, for a carafe. The windows looked out into a walled orchard with a watery moon, unpropitious for a car sleeping out, shining over the rising hills beyond the brimming river.

A gentle old nun, a working sister, for there are very marked layers of society in convent walls, brought my breakfast—and a footstool. She talked, her eyes beaming with interest. She had been out to see the car. One had never been within the gates before. They showed us their garden, sweet with rosemary and lavender, their cow and the water-gate on the river.

We went with an old French lady of seventy-five, as active as fifty, by the round Church of St. Croix whose manifest newness had grieved us with thoughts that the heavy hand of the restorer had been laid on it. But our French friend told us, in passing, that her brother had seen it fall in 1861 and the dust took a day to settle. We greatly enjoyed hearing her running comment on things as we passed. The prefecture had been a Benedictine convent, another hotel had been the Dominican rival; a curious balus-

trade, over a gateway, had fallen down that very autumn. We peered in a wood-yard housed in a thirteenth-century abbey, and gained from her an explanation for a building whose windows were green shuttered on its three stories, with an opening aimed only at the sky. It was the jail! With her, we saw a valley owned by the American,—no other name known—who here manufactures cigarette paper in great quantity. "Of what," we asked, "straw, rice, wood?" *"Non, chiffons,"* which is not as dainty a word in French as in English.

All this we had as we went with her to see a double wedding party dancing on an open *place* at the top of the high-town. Rain fell in showers and each time we sought shelter in doorways, of mansion, garage, and wood-seller's hovel in succession—any *porte* in a storm. Always prefacing to us "The peasants are sage in affairs of the weather," she asked a passing countryman. Each time she received a careful answer after a scrutiny of the heavens. Finally from a scrap of blue sky a fine afternoon was promised and it came.

We climbed by iron-railed stairs to the height that had so bothered us in descent by motor, to the old church of St. Michel whose two great buttresses spread out like props to hold it on its perch. They spread so far that a street goes under each of them in an arch. Shops were built against its walls on the bare, open square where the double wedding

parties were supposed to be dancing on the pavement. They weren't there! Madame was desolately disappointed. She asked and asked—no one knew anything. (They were the same ones who had sent us down the rapid descent the night before and we agreed with their own estimation of what they knew.) To assuage her distress we looked in the church at centuries-old ship models hung from the high roof, before shrines, as votive offerings for return from dangerous voyages. In came our friend—she had found the wedding party in the market.

Three long tables spread with white cloths were at one end. Great kettles of chicken were there, and plenty of cider and bread. All the other end of the market-house was filled with happy dancers, sixty partners on the floor at once, sixty high-set white coifs and gay beribboned aprons, sixty whirling full, black skirts! The men wore their flat black hats with silver buckles and flying ribbons, with long-legged trousers that showed up to a high waistline with a short round jacket of velvet and cloth. Old and young, the men had profiles like Roman coins. The wedding is an outdoor dance in Brittany; to-day it was in shelter only on account of the rain. Only a few had sophisticated dress and they were far from being the leaders of the day. The two brides had new velvet-banded black dresses, white silk aprons and extra pretty white coifs and each carried a bou-

quet with white paper folded around it. The music was not the traditional bagpipe and fiddle played on top of a barrel. This was regrettable, but it was an accordion, what Bernard Shaw calls a "squiffer." It was in the hands of a man who knew how to make it go!

The whole floor was filled with couples, young and old, all gay. The infectious music began to play, a sort of "pop-goes-the-weasel" air. Suddenly, hands joined and with a bow backward, and a run forward, a gallant led off with a string of twenty behind him circling into a tangling maze. Many mazes began at once, until the whole floor was filled with serpentine lines of gay white caps and the velvet and silver hats of the men. They danced with spring, heads held high.

Skirts twirled far out, the men crooked a knee and snapped thumb and finger in the air. Old dames, old men, all joined in; all were gaily footing the dance, winding in, and winding out again, with rhythmic tap as they went. We were seeing one hundred and forty Bretons dance their famous gavotte, as it had been danced for a hundred years.

CHAPTER VIII

HARBORS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

THE gate of the old convent creaked on its hinges at 8:45, not so bad for a start on the first frosty morning of the year. On leaving Quimperlé we waved adieu to a woman at her door under her sign: *Vve. S—— Tricoteuse.* There the widow sat, two small children playing at her feet, facing the world and the wolves at her door, with her knitting needles glinting at their work. It was a humble neighborhood where great loaves of bread were at the baker's window. It was what Gil Blas calls sallow-complexioned bread. Each loaf was twenty-four inches long and nine wide and cost five-and-a-half cents as our money exchanged. "Little mouths eat much bread," as they say here.

Twenty kilometres through fields being harrowed, though sodden with yesterday's rain, brought us to the suburbs of L'Orient where the houses rise, straight-walled and foundationless, from the pavement. Here was France's dream of a great port with the East when India was hers, with the West

when Canada and Louisiana were French. L'Orient was of the days when John Law, the Scotchman, was bewitching the whole country with a far-expanded Mississippi bubble.

It was the port where the *Bon Homme Richard* was outfitted. We ran the car along the quays, not very busy now, looking out at the harbor and trying to place the roadstead of Groix so often written of, in the anxious letters that passed between John Paul Jones and Franklin, in Paris.

It was while waiting long at L'Orient later on the *Alliance,* that Jones gave a party, "at great and unnecessary expense" with a mock battle between the *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard.* His sour-visaged critics forgot to say, in their letters to America, that he paid for his party, powder and all, from his own prize-money pocket.

L'Orient does not hold one now. A little steamer runs out to Belle Ile, Sarah Bernhardt's lonely island in the sea. Madame de Sévigné, chattering away with her pen, told of its merchants back from Siam with porcelains and silks. She almost bought for Mme. Grignan, her daughter, *une jolie étoffe pour robe de chambre*—but cautious spender, she didn't! Her modern touch: "Our card will let you see the situation" makes one almost believe post-cards existed in 1689!

We tried to awaken some memory of the *Bon Homme Richard,* to find someone who knew of the

naval glory that went from this port. "It's long ago!" was as near as anyone came. We left L'Orient with a patriotic thrill in honor of our Fredericksburg admiral, thinking, as we went, one gets out of Europe only what one brings. Perhaps even at home nowadays his name would suggest a dance rather than an admiral.

Both from interest and necessity of bridge, our way was inland through Hennebont, Breton for "old bridge," a brave place on the ancient Roman road through Gaul, with a spirited career behind it. It was the first place on our route to which Froissart of old had come riding up with his ever fascinating query: "What great château is this?" He went on to record his great tale of the women of Hennebont who fended for themselves at this fortress gate when their men were away. Valiantly did they defend the walls, these *dames et demoiselles d'Hennebont* under the command of Jeanne de Montfort. Froissart gave her the "courage of a man and the heart of a lion!"

So unrestored was Hennebont, so real, so romantically gated we could almost see the women on the walls with their soup kettles and hot fat, scalding their enemies with zest and hurling the rocks of six centuries ago.

Old wrought iron well-heads covered shallow wells, that were still sources of household water. Town mansions of bygone seigneurs bordered an open *place* on which stood in domination the pride

of Hennebont, Notre Dame de Paradis, a church whose whole front was one great flamboyant door and lofty steeple.

The tall curé came out of his house when we were near his doorstep. He talked of his town and laughed about the bell-ropes being tucked in cupboards with locks so the *gamins* could not pull them. He was gently of the opinion the English did not build the church though savants had said so. It seemed very French to him.

It was on this day's drive that we crossed the Pont l'Orois, a high-hung suspension bridge approached by a sharp-backed ridge. The primitive, slender bridge spanning an arm of the sea was so narrow we could just get in, so long we thought we'd never get out and so beautiful to look away from, we wanted to stop!

This was on a somewhat minor route toward Carnac and Quiberon. Carnac is the capital, one might say, of prehistoric stones. It was a gloomy, bare country with curious lanes, many and narrow, between high-stacked, steep-edged mud walls, green with their grassy cover. Trees gnarled and knobby were bent by the landward wind. An eerie feeling of one generation cometh and another passeth away crept close to us in straggling Erdevan. Here suddenly the road was in the midst of a veritable village of granite menhirs, black, grey, evenly spaced, tall, all twenty feet high at least, and far above our

heads. These spindles of stone stand in row upon row, aloft, alone, unexplained.

There were two strong links with American history here. The American flag, flying on the *Ranger,* was first saluted by a foreign power as it entered the water now before us, Quiberon Bay, within sound of these stones that taunt through the ages with their mystery. It was past these menhirs on the long *presque-isle,* this finger-like peninsula to Quiberon, that Lafayette hurried on horseback to join his boat on his voyage into fame and our history.

Here too, the French *émigrés* landed from British ships to try to save their monarch and their monarchy, to meet defeat, capture and death, on the sands and in the shallow water. General Hoche was the republican who crushed them. He had with him on this lonely road to Quiberon a man whose song goes singing through the years, Rouget de Lisle.

At Carnac a great tumulus loomed ahead by the roadside, seventy feet high and curiously like the mounds in Ohio. From its man-made height a view over moor and marsh, inlets and sea, could be had. Behind the village, behind the line of garden wall and house were the great alignments, stone after stone in parallels, line after line, even in space, each stone standing erect, in the thirteen rows. There were five miles of stones, 1991, still standing erect. Who put them there? What are they for? Old Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose oriel window still

looks out on his Welsh town, first chronicler of them, writes down after seeing them: "They are magic. The giants brought them in other times." Who can say much more to-day, when one stone alone weighs three hundred and fifty tons?

The peasants have always been afraid of them. They are Cæsar's legions turned to stone say those who live near them and whose forefathers saw the Romans. Curiously Cæsar, forever commenting on camps and customs, commented not on these stony legions.

We went on to Locmariaquer—its Highlands-of-Scotland-sounding name is natural. Bretons and Gaels are one blood and of almost one tongue. The shallow sea of Morbihan was on our left, dotted with green islets, one for each day in the year. We looked for "the table of the merchants," a great stone which sits on others so that a cavern exists beneath. When in the underground space we felt like beetles about to be crushed. The sheep looked in at us from above. Near it, as if to offer a taunt to theories of how and why, lies the greatest of all the stones thrown down by lightning and broken, almost within the memory of men now living. Its seventy feet was once its height, and it weighs four hundred tons.

The uncanny shadows were long that the tall stones cast, as we hurried, saying it was the thought of crossing that vibrating bridge in the dark that

made for speed. Soon we began to say—"we never saw that and we never passed this." Still the bridge evaded us and dusk settled. We asked our way and turned a flashlight on the kilometre posts. They were inextricable tangles of *Ploe's* and *Ker's*. It was manifest we were *trompeed,* a most expressive French term. We saw lights ahead and used Froissart's formula: "What is this city?" It was Auray, mysteriously attained by a wrong road and fifteen kilometres on our next day's way. We entered by an obscure and back-door path.

Auray gave us a warm welcome but cold rooms, though a quart of hot water, corked in a champagne bottle, was supposed to produce comfort, even luxury, in a chatteringly cold bedroom. The dinner was good, the way had been long, we slept. The town came in for some exploration in the morning; it had a few interesting arcades and four-sided slate roofs. A lovely tree-shaded, peaceful path was in sight of the river. We went by a very prosaic, crooked road to the modern pilgrimage church of Ste. Anne d'Auray, inspired by a peasant's vision, in recent times. Even in November, groups and families were piously walking toward the church. Little booths lined the approach, selling by gingerbread-fair methods. The church was as Gothic with rose windows, flying buttresses and high steepled tower, as modern hands could make it. Devout families prayed in groups. Thousands of new squares of

marble were applied to the walls, telling of pious thankfulness for returned health and requited love, for examinations passed and sons born. Daughters did not seem to require a tablet of thanks. It is one of the greatest pilgrimage places of France and the French journey to shrines as their most active form of travel, the one thing that takes them from home.

We searched for the Chartreuse, a great walled mass of picturesque buildings in a field. Much knocking brought a tight-waisted nun in silver grey and white, to the grille. She took us through many gardens and cloisters telling us no one but *messieurs* had ever been there in the days of the old Chartreuse. We had never thought of a monk as a gentleman, as a *monsieur!* The Duchesse d'Angoulême, daughter of Louis XVI, she who survived all the horrors of the Revolution and saw father, mother and brother go to their fate, built a classic chapel here to cover the bones of nine hundred brave men, prisoners shot at dawn in the name of liberty, after capture on the sands of Quiberon. Their names were dimly reminiscent of the glories of France, de Sombreuil, de Soulanges, de Talbouet. It was a chill, white, lonely place.

It was good to be out in the sunshine again and to see the fields. On a most lovely byroad we passed a pillar marking the victory of Jean de Montfort. At this spot in Auray in the Hundred Years' War with England, they struggled in the marshes for this

path, fighting among the tall reeds which still grew there and that were sere and brown as we crossed the marsh on a narrow road. We passed an old mill with a pond, full of reflection, and climbed a defile under great rocks,—all the fought-for path of 600 years ago.

Glimpses of the shallow sea of Morbihan with its islets followed us to Vannes, a department capital, with great public buildings and an open square where sat on his horse an armored knight, a gallant and an inspiring figure with a feathery plume, Arthur of Richmont, dead in the 1400's but alive to the Vannetois to-day. The fixity of French homes makes for heroes. Their forefathers fought under them. Their heroes walked the same stones in the same streets. We walked them too and found the stones very hard and penitential, but saw many beautiful streets of hill-piled houses, timber-crossed in black and white, and not too ruinous. The signs were sometimes in Breton which, too, was spoken on the streets. By towers and walls under an adequate town gate, we followed an esplanade called "la Rabine" out the long river harbor. Ochre-colored sails hung limp on the masts of seagoing boats that men were hauling by rope up to town.

Vannes was a fighting place, in and out from this harbor, when Cæsar grappled their boats with hooks and went at them, hand to hand and hammer and tongs. The Venetii—the name has changed little—

commanded his respect and he occupied many lively pages of his commentaries describing their leather sails and chains for sailing gear. Their harbor is very quiet now with green banks, with all promenading Vannes out taking the sun. We passed under the monument to the author of Gil Blas, born in this countryside. It had a peasant girl outstretching a palm to honor him, as if Le Sage lives with them, too.

In the morning we aimed inland to the northeast, for Josselin and Ploermel. As we left the sea and rose to higher, barer land scantily inhabited, we found a white frost coating every twig, every leaf, with white and feathery efflorescence. The sky was an even dull grey. On the bare moor, before reaching the village of Elven, were two solitary stone posts by the roadside, topped with great balls, cryptically marked *Largoet.* We turned into a wheel track between the posts, going in and on, engulfed in mist and frost. A hunting lodge with a gate closed the path. It had stone hares, crouching and peering at the gables and corners. The gate was opened and we were courteously asked to warm ourselves by the log fire. A breakfast for a hunting party was simmering on the hearth, and there was the studied rusticity of heavy oak and simple linen. We were assured if we kept *tout le droit, tout le droit,* we should find ourselves at the place we sought, the ruined towers of Elven. The pines came close, the oaks hung low, pearly balls of mistletoe brushed us

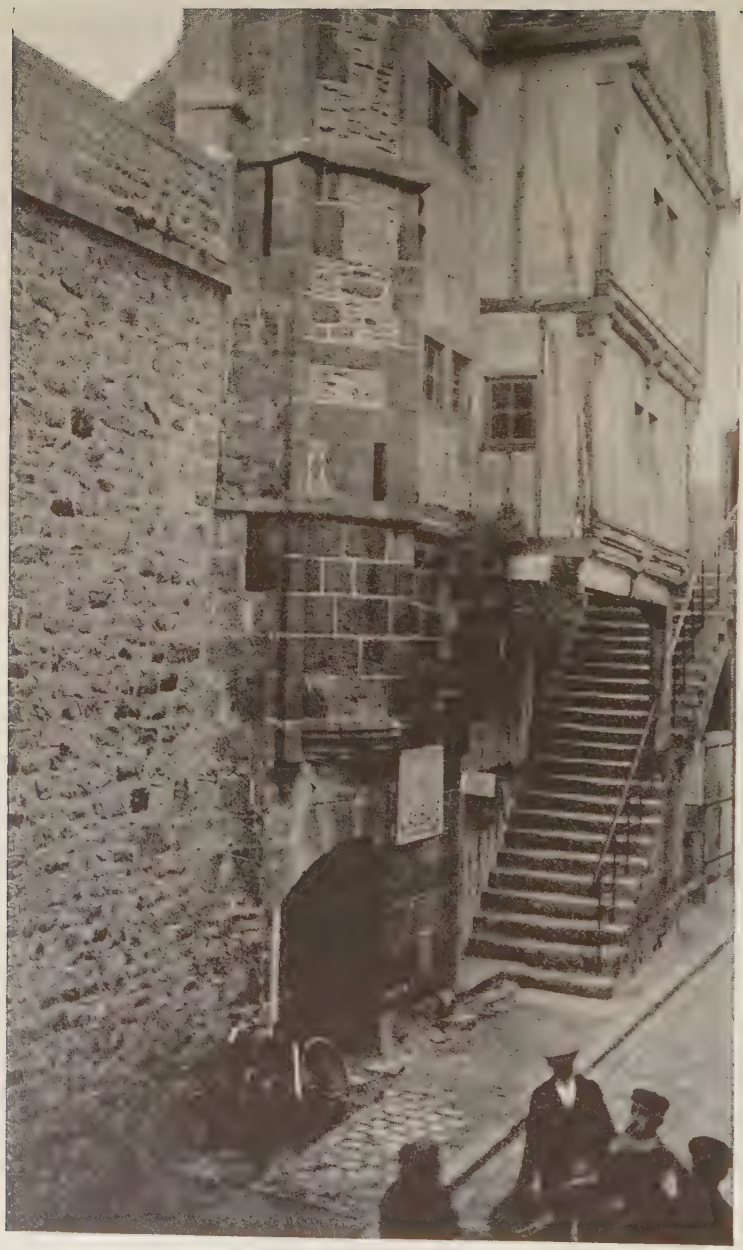
as we passed. The white mist waved across our path in soft, stealthy, far-flung scarfs. The bracken was silvery above the ground. Suddenly in the mist before the car rose two high ruined towers guarded by a drawbridge and a moat. Frosty briars fended us from the logs over the drawbridge. Under the crested and boasting portcullis we went and across the desolate courtyard into the great hollow keep, looking up through its floorless rooms at the cold sky, at the cold hearths adhering to the grey walls. The mists floated in at the gaunt windows. A King of England was prisoner in this desolate tower for fifteen years, not a king in the far backward of time, but a Tudor, Henry VII, wrecked when a prince on the shores of Brittany, after the battle of Tewkesbury that Shakespeare has made live for us. We turned the car cautiously by the moat and the mist closed in behind us.

When the fog had left us, we saw in a village what we took to be a light, lean heifer, led by an old woman. The two changed our outlook and livened us with laughing. It was a long-legged pig with prodigious, pendulous ears. The pig was attached, not driven, by a cord on its hind leg and frisked and coquetted and danced. Its wagging and pendant ears were enough for good-sized purses even if pigskin is only recently a proper pocketbook material.

In the heaths of Lanvaux we came upon a château,

The Little Rivers of Quimper

Bowered Cottages of Basse-Bretagne



THE ONLY STREET IN MONT ST. MICHEL

in a heavy-planted woods at the bottom of a hill. It had round cone-topped towers peacefully reflected in a pool and was notable among châteaux for its old and beautiful trees. It was tightly closed and we asked a wood-chopper and we asked a little girl: "What is the name of this château?" All alert, came the invariable answer: "Oh! madame, it is *the* château!" It's the only one in the world to them who live on its land. We stopped to search for stars on the map indicating such a place, to search the château book which is supposed to have them all. We shuffled pages and searched again, but unidentified it was until we came, hungry, to Plumelen. It was a drab place, but we entered the little inn, passing wood-carters eating by the kitchen hearth and another bare-tabled company, to a third room where a fire burned on the hearth, and one woman and seven men were seated at luncheon. Where could they all have come from! Of them we asked of the château. It was Tredion. "Who owns it?" "Oh, always the same, M. de Tredion." The whole conservative quality of French society was expressed in the answer on the road and in the inn. It is *the* château and "de Tredion owned it always."

The kindliness of the group in that low-ceilinged room remains in mind. The one woman at the table warmed her husband's plate at the fire, two for us and her own. All helped satisfy our curiosity as to the château and the road. They in turn were

curious about America. Would we tell them what we drank in America? Every ear at table was attentive to hear what we should say. We explained we had more and different fruit on our tables, we had cream on things, we used more coffee and had tea. There wasn't any use eulogizing water. It is not understood as a beverage in France. They all sadly wagged their heads. What would a dinner be without wine even for the poor! And two men said: "All the Americans drank when they were here! The colonel, the captain and the soldiers. Cognac, madame, I saw what I have never seen before—a man lift a bottle like this"—a cider bottle—"and hold it to his mouth until it was empty!" They all wagged their heads in respectful horror at the capacity of such a man. Still sad, we left them—and still eating.

Warmed, informed and fed we were quickly on our way another generous ten kilometres to Josselin, by many thought the loveliest of the châteaux of France. The lonely houseless road flowed in sweeping distance, a broad and *canalised* river showed, tree-bordered, in the distance. Abruptly we came upon the village of Josselin from a table-land, descending into it by a precipitous, slippery hill. It was a hill slope village, forlorn and neglected, crying with dilapidation and poverty.

Then the château burst upon the sight across the river, a perfectly enormous habitation, rising above

the smooth water, aloof, great-walled, with three dominating towers on its river front. Along the fortress wall between the towers, pleasant gabled windows of the Renaissance looked over as if with a laugh above a threat.

The château of Josselin was two fronted. Toward the river it was feudal, toward the gardens it was glorious, brilliant Renaissance. It had a peculiar history. It has always belonged to the Rohans. The Rohan of the early 1800's was a cardinal. The estate was allowed to go to ruin. The heavens could be seen through the château roofs. The Cardinal Rohan—was he the Rohan of the Diamond Necklace scandal?—had no house, no son. He let the roofs fall. Josselin was restored when it was inherited by the next heir, a gentleman with a grand air, with a bust done by Rodin, who did him well.

The long Renaissance façade has no equal in France. There are two stories on this garden side, with eleven great double-decked stone-fronted dormers—gables, rather, in size—that look out from the blue slates in intricate, lovely, three-pointed gayety. They have a sort of triumph of design as if the builder had tried each time to excel, thinking of the Rohan motto *à plus, à plus,* better, better!

Along the eaves between these windows an openwork, stone balustrade runs like jewel work, also in rivaling design. A row of crowns topped one; little

animals like marmosets another; interlaced letters form another; quatrefoils the next. Descending the façade twelve twisty, spiraled stones form pillars which are hollow conduits for the rain, ending in gargoyle mouths.

With all this revelry of stone the main door was quite simple. The interior of Josselin was shown by a butler proud of the history of the house. His first word was that we would find the house *bien chauffee.* Room led from room, great, generous and broad, all properly paneled and chimneyed, beamed and tiled about the year 1870. But the portraits were veritable; they were of the famous men and beautiful women who had lived here,—the Rohans of the house: one, a Protestant in the terrible time of the wars—fair women and brave men, Henry IV's grandmother, and his granddaughter, both Rohans of Josselin. The hangings were crimson and rich and deep. In the library stood a heavy nut-brown oak table, strong and of simple make. It was seven feet long, resting on two heavy, scrolled ends. Henry IV signed the Edict of Nantes on that table (in Nantes)—bringing peace and toleration to a troubled land.

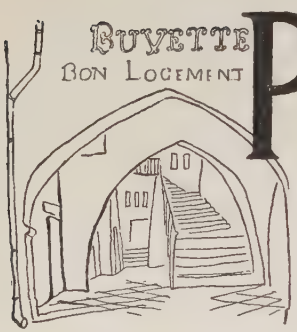
A small dark-haired boy of eight, with a fine lean face and bare knees, came in the entrance gate as we went out. He was the present Duke. The Duchess, a sombre, youthful figure in quiet black, went down a muddy village lane with a workman.

The boy's father went to the war as all the Rohans have done—and "his blood dyes the banners of France."

Josselin—the name had beauty in it! We left it by a sharp turn up hill. There was still frost on the hedges toward Ploermel, a place with an inn for the night. This fact was known to us in advance each day, by consulting the Michelin guide, which gave us the population of towns, the inns and their quality. This was indicated by a little set of roofs. Four gables meant palatial, three gables, good; two would do; one gable meant a very plain inn, while an egg-cup and fork crossed—French imagination delights us—meant we might be able to get an egg for luncheon and it had better be boiled!

CHAPTER IX

KING ARTHUR'S FOREST



PLOERMEL was reached and the inn for the night found; there were still two good hours of daylight left. We filled up with *huile* and *essence,* found two more nails in the tires and determined to see King Arthur's forest before we either dined or slept.

We went north on a broad highway marked Rennes—a city we had been in earlier in the journey—but turned to the left on a narrow road where goad-driven oxen hauled heavy tumbrils loaded with pine boughs. At the foot of the dark wooded valley stood a black frowning fortress, a castle fit for the legended forest of Merlin, rising from the water of a murky pool. It "preserved a fifteenth-century silhouette" as the French say. It was almost hoary enough for King Arthur to our eyes. Past the water and through a rising hillside of sombre forest trees, up and then up more, we went onto moors as if on top of the world. A sign in the heaths at the right

said: "Fields dangerous!" Army corps come up on some of these remote places to have target practice, but we decided it was bogs of which we were warned.

The woods came closer; the trees grew bigger; the distance stretched off in greater and greater loneliness. There was some sign of wood-cutting and foresting having been done but there was no human habitation after the black and watery château.

This was Paimpont, King Arthur's Forest, on the remote edges and outskirts of history. Here Merlin lived and here was his enchanted spring where he sang to his harp. This was where Heine longed to come to rest under Merlin's oak. Every tree was hoary with crystals as if the very air had congealed on the twigs. Heavy mists lay in the dips of the road. Stillness hung on the heights. There was a valley in the fabled forest of Paimpont called the valley *sans retour*. It looked as if it might be close ahead.

We were ready to believe anything about Merlin and Arthur but there were not going to be any knights to help us if we failed to turn around in the narrow road. At last a stony ledge came close. It was possible to turn without getting bogged and, lights on, two Yankees departed from King Arthur's domain as fast as they could go through the misty valley and the "dangerous fields," dipping into the deep forest and past the watery château of Trecesson

and a chapel that had a queer story of a bride buried alive hundreds of years ago. The highway was a good place to get back to, and so was Ploermel.

The immaculate inn had a cheerful fire at which we sat and had coffee at once, for the frost had come close to us as well as the lonely dark.

At dinner two travelers came in, a lady and gentleman, who knew the forest of Paimpont and our road. In a low and pleasant voice we were told the story of the bride. Long ago a peasant was out setting a trap to poach a hare. He was frightened on hearing horsemen and climbed an oak. Seven brothers, all on horseback, stopped under the tree with a lady in a carriage. They dug a grave and put her in. She pleaded but they pushed her in with all her wedding finery. The *vivant* part was emphasized in the telling. The peasant thought he had had a nightmare. He saw the ground was disturbed but went home. His restlessness made his wife demand what ailed him. He told and she made him go to the château—the one in the water. The seigneur wouldn't believe the tale, but they all went to the spot and sure enough there under the oak was the grave and the bride still living! They took her out but she soon died and until the Revolution her bridal gown was the ceremonial robe in the chapel. The innkeeper stood and nodded at each point; the hare, the horses, the oak. The sinister story has clung to the sombre place, and we appre-

ciated hearing it from one whose family had always lived there.

Even with thinking of châteaux in enchanted forests and Merlin's spring in the woods and the seven brothers, sleep came soundly, for we had had a long day. Toward morning a most terrific thrashing of a cold gasoline engine began. All the roosters in the neighborhood wakened and crowed. It was the near-by baker kneading his bread by motor and choosing an unearthly hour.

We had our morning coffee in the picturesque warm kitchen because the coppers were so beautiful on the wall, the dark oak cupboards so waxed, the red tiles so clean on the floor.

Soon we were on the road, looking in the grim grey church of Ploermel for a moment, at a fine window and a duke and duchess on their great gravestone. The church was filled with praying old women, white coifed and still as if they too were always there like the window and the ducal pair.

The road after Ploermel was off to the southeast toward Nantes, on the Loire, toward lower land and warmer weather. On this roadside as on many another in Brittany, we saw withered blackberries—a puzzling sight where thrift and frugality are uppermost. They are not eaten by the peasants for a crown was made of thorns and in their pious minds it would be wrong to enjoy fruit from such a wicked bush.

Redon came first, through an open country with quarries and thin woods. There were only occasional foresters' huts with thatched roofs and even thatched walls making them curiously suggestive of muskrat houses. We passed men, at intervals, rather primitive and wild, on the road with their oxen and tumbrils and loads of pine logs. By and by the lonely moor, the last of beautiful Brittany, became a repetition whose curious feature fascinated us. We descended a long hill with no human life in sight, then rose on the moor and at the crest was a farm and a pair of windmills on stone towers forty feet high. Their great arms were bare and tethered into stillness. One windmill was on the right side of the road, one on the left. Again and again a long, uninhabited descent, a long rise, a farm, two windmills, one on the right, one on the left.

Redon was cut in two by the railroad with its active life on one side and its twelfth-century church on the other. The day is spent rolling little gates across the main thoroughfare. The old church was bisected also. It had an isolated tower so far away that it took all one's architectural imagination to believe a nave was razed between. We followed the Grande Rue—I remember the name because we inadvertently hurt a man's civic pride by asking which was the *Grande* one!—by keeping on a stone-block pavement out of town, because of a very explicit direction that we should not cross a bridge.

Pas le pont, pas le pont!—it seemed all would be lost if that particular bridge were crossed—and the man's face remains a personality to us from his anxiety. He had what Le Sage called an "epigrammatic countenance."

However, our straight sixty kilometres to Nantes did take us across the marshy valley of the Vilaine, now a greater river than at Rennes, past the state forest of du Gavre. Here the stone kilometre posts failed us and we stopped at a small house to ask if our way was right. We met a courtliness and a natural ease of manner, a desire to help that was not exceeded when a limousine,—a rare meeting—also stopped and master and man wanted to help. The peasant had spied a *clou* in our tire and was getting it out and explaining to us that only in dry weather did his countrymen's sabots shed nails. The trouble is they may fall out on dry days, but they stay on the roads through the wet ones! They are disastrous to horses' feet as well as tires through all the wooden-shoe country.

The last five kilometres of our road was over the direct thoroughfare from Vannes, a much-used route, beautifully tree-planted, but with as shatteringly picked out a road as exists in France. The holes had hard edges, not crumbly ones, with the result that driving was a series of sharp falls and blows as one wheel after another entered the abrupt pickouts. *C'est la guerre*—but on every road were piles of

stones for repair, hand broken by old men whacking away making road metal as the English call it. It is piled by the hundred miles on the roads. The road engines and their caravaning crews, wives and babies with them, are mending steadily the roads that were perfect and will soon be perfect again.

There was always an element of adventure in entering an unknown city driving one's own car. Entering Nantes was like fetching a circle. The hotel that we aimed for, a famous one built in 1790, was very central on the map. It was on the Place du Graslin, a square of which Nantes is proud. Longfellow described his diligence rolling into this hotel's great archway. Stendhal found long comfort in it. Henry James was here and called the archway windy. But every time we asked for the Place du Graslin we seemed to be sent in a wider sweep toward the river, through miles of streets, with every short cut *interdite*. A phrase of French description kept coming to mind of " Nantes girdling her elderly figure with a gorgeous belt of eighteenth-century thoroughfares."

An inaccessible hidden hillside of poor, piled-up living, a place of stone stairs in the streets, pushed all traffic into roundabout ways below it. Nantes abounded in stars and radiants from many centres; there were vistas of them but they did not connect well. Perhaps the Nantoise habit of mind was confused from contemplating the Loire wandering in

three river-beds and having here three confusing tributaries.

At last we sighted the *place* and passed in front of the heavy pillars of the municipal Opera House of the days of Louis XVI. Heeding finger-boards marked *Sens de Circulation,* we reached the old hotel carriage entrance of which our distinguished fellow *voyageurs* had written. Our entry was past the bureau, under the hotel arched above us, into a remote covered yard where we became one of twenty cars wedged in stationary quiet for over Sunday. It was *exeunt omnes* or not at all!

The house had a pleasant enfolding comfort; a grand scale expressed in oval bedrooms, rich silk curtains, bathrooms and a white paneled dining-room—and this after 130 years of daily use! "They order this matter better in France," as Lawrence Sterne said. All the useful and used buildings around this *place* were architecturally balanced and encircled with an iron balcony. This eighteenth-century grandeur was designed by the architect of the Palais Royale, and built by a benefactor of Nantes named Graslin. He was a financier of public spirit in dispensing his fortune, which he made in *tontine,* then the new idea in insurance.

It was Ste. Catherine's day, November 24th, and the shop-windows were gay with frilly lace caps. We saw girls wearing these lace fripperies, laughing and running hand in hand. Any girl who put a cap

on her head on Ste. Catherine's day might be kissed by any young man who met her. The whole city, as Paris would be, too, was sparkling with the fun of it. She "sets her cap"—we all know the phrase, from this custom.

You cannot go far in Nantes without getting to the riverside where the Loire whirls in eddies, furious, rapid and wicked-looking. In November the high water looked equal to the Noyades of Carrier, that man of horror, sent down from Paris in the frenzied days of the Terror to this republican city. This tiger of a man—once a quiet lawyer—condemned masses of Vendeans, brave peasant-fighters for royalty, and young girls and children, wholly unoffending. The town-hero Cambronne was accused among the first. He had slept in a bedroom with fleur-de-lys on the walls. Some *bonheur,* good luck, of a strange kind, must have watched over him for he lived to be credited with saying at Waterloo: "The old guard dies but never surrenders"—and to die in peaceful old age.

Carrier's terrorizing ingenuity turned to drowning by the hundreds in the river, until it was so full no mariner could cast anchor there. Riverside mansions with their graceful iron balconies, their aristocratic silvery stone façades, looked down then, as now, on the river scene, but now are given over to poverty. Sinister tradition attaches them to fortunes made in the American slave trade when Nantes

carried annually twelve thousand of this sad human freight.

An immense six-towered castle by the river with its tall dungeon-keep frowned out upon sugar refineries and biscuit factories, the nation's cookshop for table delicacies, but it used to guard the last marches of Brittany and here Anne de Bretagne was born and clacked about in little sabots dear to Breton memory—the only Queen of France who ever wore them. Here Louis XI came to visit with an eye to gathering in the heritage of the little heiress for his son Charles. Being in great good humor, he walked these fortress walls with the Duke and swore "that here all the kings in the world would be safe." Whereupon the Duke built in haste two more towers and put sixty-three cannon on them, a great investment in artillery, but proportioned to his dread. The family means of defiance seems ever to have been to build a pair of towers—as his daughter Anne did, at St. Malo and at Dinan and Brest.

On Sunday morning it is always possible to get mail at a French post-office. The *Poste Restante* window collects a small charge for each letter handled and this makes it a business transaction, not a favor. It is much used by soldiers, and *commis voyageurs*. *Rien,* nothing, fell sadly on our ears, after working up in a queue of twenty. The car being embedded in a courtyard of motors we took a tram to go to the museum and after sitting quietly

in progress through stars and crescents, boulevards and river-facing thoroughfares, suddenly we saw a building on the river marked *Poste Centrale.* We bolted from the tram in a way to scare the conductress. Here was our mail, of course! We went in and around and down corridors and finally fell in line. "That girl at the window has the same color of sweater as at the other post-office." She had. "She looks like the same girl." Another move nearer. "This is the same place!" It couldn't be, but the girl's cheerful laugh proved it was. We had ridden a long distance and had then passed the front of a building whose other end we had entered on a distant street. Nantes had its own way of laying out streets!

Along the quay there was a curious bridge among many, that carried its passengers in a basket. We rambled through streets full of Sunday promenaders, seeing the infrequently monumented Louis XVI on a tall column. The most beautiful thing in Nantes was in the cathedral that has been rebuilding for five centuries. We entered its high white interior to find standing free in the transept, a marble monument of the early Renaissance, a *finale* for the independence of the old dukedom, built by Michael Colomb at the order of Anne to honor her father and her mother, Francis II and Margaret of Foix,—the last ducal rulers of Brittany.

Colomb went to Italy for that black marble table

stone ten inches thick, and brought it up the Rhone by boat and by oxen across France to Nantes. On it lay the ducal effigies, crowned and gowned in quiet peace, little angels guarded their heads, hound and lion rested their feet.

Little weeping figures, apostles and mourners lurked in the niches below. At the four corners stood white marble figures of quiet young women, gowned in the dress of the day, Force, Temperance, Prudence and Justice, good Breton virtues. Justice is Anne's portrait. On her high forehead is the crown of France and a veil touches the top of the heavy sword of Justice that Anne's little hand held tight. She is a small woman with heavy hair, meshed over with a net; her tight, many-buttoned bodice is of ermine with black marks on the white marble. Enfolded in a quiet cloak, she whose ermine-inspired destiny made her twice Queen of France, stands, eyes downcast, at her father's head.

Stendhal wrote down that Nantes is full of *contes,* tales. He tells of the Duchesse de Berry who sought to raise an insurrection to put her son on the shaky throne of Louis Philippe. The police looked for the Bourbon lady hidden four months in a quiet house in Nantes. The police searched the house but the *duchesse* with two friends was behind a movable iron fireback in the chimney. Stendhal, the novelist, took delight in measuring the space. It was fifty-five centimetres by one metre thirty, about two by

four feet. The police sat down to wait. The day was cold. They started a fire. Some Gaboriau, some Sherlock Holmes, may have suggested it. Out swung the iron plate, out jumped the *duchesse,* hair singeing, clothes in disarray! Not bad, as the French so often say, for so recent a year as 1832.

Stendhal and an American of *formes herculéenes,* dined together in our hotel a century ago. This man from New Orleans was sixteen when the famous battle was fought "where five thousand men, only National Guard, met and routed an army of ten thousand English, the best soldiers in the world, and who had come after fighting against the French of Napoleon for many years."

"'We met them with sharp-shooters,' said the huge American,—'and in less than an hour all their officers were shot.' . . . The day of the battle one man alone of the English army—Colonel Regnier born in France (Stendhal enjoys that!) reached the entrenchment. He turned to call his men, but fell dead. That night, the battle gained, two of the Americans disputed the glory of having killed the courageous man.

"'That will be easy to verify,' said one. 'I shot him in the heart.'

"'And I, I shot him in the eye,' said the other. They went to the field of battle with lanterns. Colonel Regnier was shot in the heart and in the eye."

A "place of tales"; Jules Verne was born here and Benjamin Franklin—his name still honors a street—tells us this of the ladies of Nantes in its richest period. At his welcoming ball: "There were no heads less than five lengths of a face above the top of the forehead." Nearer Paris he dined at the Duc de Rochefoucauld's and sagely contrasts: "Where there were duchesses and a countess"—"no head higher than a face and a half."

Our route from Nantes was the same as Franklin's on the river road toward Angers in a vineyard country rich and fine, past windmills twirling on the summits. We felt a sense of proprietorship in its asphalt road—though it soon ended—for friends had told us the American troops had mended this worn thoroughfare in from the coast. At the long-drawn-out complexities of narrow-streeted Ancenis we took delight in heeding a left-over military sign to Ameriman camions: "Attention! Five miles per hour!"

In the most contracted part where passing a cart is difficult, so closely do the house-fronts face each other, we met a wedding party. The bride in long, airy veil and gossamer finery, headed the procession on the bridegroom's arm. Two and two, the wedding party of fifty followed behind them. All were smiling and yet intent on being a part of the happy procession. The "narrow road in Ancenis" was where, Victor Hugo tells, eight thousand Vendeans were killed in one fight.

There were long glimpses of the misty flooded Loire with green banks and white châteaux, sheltering in woods on the south of the river and our road angled around the château of Ver—just another of France's two thousand, with its blue-slated, extinguisher-topped towers, its silvery façade, among tall poplars.

There were flowers in abundance, the kind Renan called "the luxury of the poor" by the little houses and a more creature comfort, less abject simplicity of living than in rural Brittany. At Varades where bridge and village coincide, we found, at the inn, a cheerful wood fire in a chimney with an armorial fireback.

Champtocé, poor and unprosperous, had a huge ruin of a castle which barred its eastern end from an old bridge over the black and dormant waters of a small river. The grim ruin is Bluebeard's Castle. *Barbe Bleue* is still a phrase of actual terror in this countryside, more than a fireside tale or mere folklore. It centres on these ruins, now moldering and overrun with nettles. A cylindrical dungeon, too solid to fall, stands defiant still, in surroundings dank and blighted.

Curiously, there is a minute record of this old castle. There is no need to imagine its glories. Its walls were hung with cloth of gold and silk, its chapel had vases of gold and precious stones. Its master in the 1430's, Gilles de Retz, had a guard

The Ruined Towers of Elven
The King Prisoned Here Sent Sebastian Cabot to America

Sheep on Roadside Turf

Finistère, the Rocks of Trépassé

Wayside Calvaire in Comfort, Brittany

of two hundred men, pages and chaplains, choir singers and musicians. At forty, he had reached the highest military rank. He gave mystery plays and reveled in extravagance. He dyed his chin tuft sky-blue according to Bernard Shaw. He asked the pope for special leave to have a gold cross carried before him as he walked. His income from rents was three hundred thousand livres. It went so fast that he searched *le grand œuvre*—he shut himself up in this tower to make diamonds, to transmute base metals into gold. He had sold himself to the devil, so the whispers went around. There were tales of human sacrifice and so flagrant did they become that he, the Marechal of France, familiar of King and Pope, was tried and hanged for murder. Some tell he was burned on this bridge. Just as one wonders how much was envy or calumny or evidence by torture—all the motives were there, comes the exact court record. Stendhal took time to read them all, finding there a picture of life to compare with Benvenuto Cellini's. Forty-six *squelettes* were found hidden here at Champtocé. Years later Louis XI, not without sinister records of his own, demolished the château and left it to its folk-lore and its haunting memories, to the "asps and vipers and venomous beasts" said to lurk in the nettles of Bluebeard's courtyard.

CHAPTER X

BY THE LOIRE

THE broad and glistening Loire had been at our right from Nantes, but at the village of St. George the highway cut across a loop of land direct for Angers. Unexpectedly there rose before us the park gates, the broad approach, the distant façade of the first palace in our journey, the château of Serrant. Its buff stone and blue slates had a seventeenth-century look but the part Philip Delorme designed had many glorious windows of the time of Francis I. Another side was all balustrades and walks above a sheet of water. Serrant was once bought by an Irish peer, named Walsh, whose daughter Valentine carried it into the ducal ownership of the Trémoille.

November was called Brumaire, the month of fogs, in the republican calendar. There had been a white fog of which we still saw traces above the rivers and marshes. Its greatest evidence we passed just after leaving the clipped copses and miles of avenued roadside of Serrant. A new car, powerful

in type, had hit a tree at great speed so that the tree was back of the driver's seat. Each passer-by stopped to moralize. It was its first run upon the road. The supreme horror seemed to be that it cost forty-five thousand francs! "A thousand of anything always sounds so much" as the old Van Bibber story said.

Angers lay across a river, the Mayenne, supposed by many to be the origin of the name of our Pine Tree State.

The bridge, not quite wide enough for its traffic, set us at the foot of a black, seventeen-towered fortress that embattled the very sky. Its towers, round and monstrous, were banded in contrasting light and shade and were rather beheaded in appearance with their flat tops. The useless bulk was shouldered aside by the modern highway which swept up in tree-planted width past old moats and frowning walls. Roses grew now where fighters died. There was a busy, up-to-date tolerance, one felt, in Angers, to-day, of the gloomy nest of the family of Anjou and of the Capets and Plantagenets. Angers gave kings to many thrones but is now busy supplying slates for French roofs. It has torn down its walls, laid out boulevards and built a modern city on them. It was on a clipped and disciplined parkway, past modern theatres and white stone business buildings that we found our hotel.

In the effort of Angers to live prosperously and

yet in propinquity with the twelfth century, Viollet-le-Duc, that diligent renovator of the 1860's was summoned to do—one almost says to do violence to—its towers and palace. Once the kings', and long Cardinal Balue's home, it is now in perfect order, aggressively striped in stone and brick. The ascent was up a broad spiral staircase to the banqueting hall of the Plantagenets. All Angers gave assurance that its beamed ceiling, its lofty stone walls and round-arched window stones, even the fascinating fish-scale tiles on the floor, were of the twelfth century. It is one of the great rooms of the past where the very forefathers of history have feasted and drunk deep.

Angers divides with Aix-en-Provence, King René of Anjou's treasures. The church has coffers full of tapestries that used to mask the bare stone rooms of the fortress by the river, to hang on the walls of the cathedral on fête days, or to loan to Paris on great occasions and enough to furnish the walls of the old palace with room after room of the finest and rarest tapestries in France.

Duc Louis of Anjou had a great set made of the Apocalypse from an illuminated book he borrowed from his "brother," the Emperor Charles V. The seven-headed monsters seem more friendly when you know that the Duc and Charles themselves were personally fascinated by them. Pleasanter in subject were the flowery tapestries with gardens, where St.

Maurice, the patron of Angers, digs among his fruits and offers pears in a lordly dish to the King and Queen of England *qui joyeusement* receive them, as the old woven letters read. Tapestry-portrayed Rohans happily play in their garden, on the *orgue* —a veritable chest of whistles, while their children listen.

The high-shouldered cathedral adjoining the palace was built to be seen above a tightly compressed, walled town. This effect can be seen in Pennell's drawings of it, but now Angers has torn away the setting and opened wide, hillside stairs and approaches. Inside, it still has beauty in high vaulting and fine glass and, on days of fête, the famous tapestries.

St. Maurice and his dish of pears of the thirteen hundreds was what made us notice the fruit shops with their big, mouth-watering pears. We bought one, an Angevine, or pear of Anjou, by weight two-and-one-half pounds and by girth seventeen inches! Though we both ate valiantly at it for our breakfast and sent the rest to the chef who made a noble dish of it for our luncheon, we then had to share it with two others!

Old towers, great cross-timbered houses, Renaissance courtyards with corner-set stairs, fragments of cloisters, arches, and long stone steps, Black Angers, as Shakespeare called it, had them all.

Before going on we went to an ancient bridge over

the Loire as old as the Romans, called *Les Ponts-de-Cé.* It was two miles long, in that it took two miles to cross the Loire, with a road over three islands and four bridges broken by wars and water, but built and rebuilt. We drove on the levée. Broad garden-set fields were below. The river shortened and brightened our way. The houses sat with roof-tops below us or, for variety, on tower-like foundations, so that their occupants by entering the cellar and ascending looked out upon the happy world of road and river.

The levée was faced with masonry toward the water. It had a tight stone wall at its top. Village followed village, St. Martins-on-the-levée, St. Lambert's-on-the-levée and St. Mathurins, long drawn out, at a suspension bridge. The Loire was now bridged frequently, perhaps as a military necessity. A many-arched stone bridge carried us over to Saumur. Its blue, riverside roofs and peaked belfries rose above a long, even line of clipped trees, trained *en berceau,* flat and cradle-fashion. Atop the old town the square, castled keep piled on the hill. A fifth the size of Angers, Saumur had a quiet, crushed air, as if its vast castle had been too much for it. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes ruined Saumur. There was still a *Temple* as the Protestant place of worship is always called. They are never called an *église.* We asked if many belonged to it. "Oh, no, madame, very few. Not

many at all." The repudiation was quite as if we had asked about typhus victims.

This old riverside city was the scene of Balzac's Eugénie Grandet. The local tradition is that Balzac loved a daughter of an old miser and not being eligible, he had revenge in his novel.

Saumur was a place of faded fortune, of outlived ardor, but it had a cavalry school; and that school has had two pupils—Wellington and Joffre!

We spent the night here and heard a blind man rattling his cup: "I sing of love and of pleasure——" in the shabby, narrow street in the rainy darkness of early evening.

The morning found us headed to the east along the quay with the river on our left under clipped trees and under honeycombed stone cliffs, conveniently dug out for chambered wine cellars and stables and garages, even into humble homes with cheerful breakfast smoke coming out among the trees of the hilltop! An almost continuous line of these long-stretched villages, with one ruin towered in beauty on a height, brought us shortly to an abrupt turn south to Fontevrault. We went up a grassy vale beside a narrow-gauge track that managed to cross the road more times than necessary. In ten kilometres of this byroad we came in sight of the old abbey of Fontevrault sheltered in the valley end. It was lost to sight as we entered the white-stone village with its well-built houses. We found its great

portal and felt rather proud that we were so well on our way and the hour not yet 9:30.

There was a huge knocker on the door of the Abbey entrance which made a great noise and a guard uniformed in red and blue, crunched his key and peeked out. The Abbey was closed to visitors. We sought explanations. He must keep the door locked but asked us inside and locked it again with Bastille-like scrunchings. We might perhaps be allowed in at two in the afternoon.—Our well-started day!—"Why? Why?" we asked. "We have come to see the Abbey and the graves of the kings of England, Richard Cœur de Lion."

"Did we not know it was a prison?"

Not actively a prison, we had to admit. The commandant was very strict, it appeared.

We asked if our cards could be sent to the commandant. Confiscating the camera and putting us on chairs in the guard house, the keeper went off and came back wreathed in smiles. Every Frenchman we have met is by nature obliging. He looked as might an ambassador who had accomplished a great mission. The commandant would send a guard to take us in. Behind him, every door opened and locked in passing, we entered the old Abbey that has the most curious history of any in the world. It was a monastery and nunnery combined for weary royalties and aristocrats, men and women, an order of its own, secluded here by the fountain of Evrault,

governed always by an abbess, and rich from the revenues of Ponts-de-Cé. Here two great kings of England are buried with their wives, Henry Plantagenet and Richard Cœur de Lion. "Here's an acre sown indeed with the richest, royallest seed."

We descended steps into the old abbey church of the eleven hundreds, a gaunt shell of its former glories, a bare nave with round-arched windows and a superb round-pillared tower where the altar chapel and transepts met. Strange things had happened in its eight hundred years. Earth had gathered, no man knows how; the dust was six feet above the bases of the pillars. We walked as upon a cave floor.

"Before the altar" the old chronicles say, Henry II of England was buried. He died at Chinon, his sons in revolt against him. The tomb was here beneath the sand. Behind an iron rail, roughly safe in the unused church, were the four contemporaneous effigies of monarchs and queens, *Elinore de Guienne* wife of Henry II whom we know best as Elinor of Acquitaine. Beside her lays *Richard dit Cœur de Lion, Roi d'Angleterre* her son, and Henry II of England, her husband.

These portraits in stone, curiously new looking, in reality seven hundred years old, were faintly colored with paint. Napoleon III, wishing to be gracious to Queen Victoria, made ready to present them to England. They were taken to the Louvre and touched up with pink and gold. But all the anti-

quaries of France cried out and Victoria wrote that she did not wish anything opposed to " the pious and patriotic wishes of the kings, her predecessors of the House of Anjou." So they were returned.

They sleep more peacefully than they lived. It was Henry Adams who called attention to Henry II's keeping Elinor in prison eleven years of her long life, connecting it with Chaucer's phrase of women desiring to have *souveraintie*. The kings of England were of French blood then, but the strangeness of this dusty bleak Abbey harboring English royal graves, remote, debased in its surroundings—its unreality, mounted as we stayed. Gothic cloisters and Renaissance chapter-room told of later days. Fourteen princesses weary of courts and five royalties sought tranquillity here. Windows had royal coats of arms; tiles showed interlaced monograms. Refectory, paths and gardens, we were locked in and out of them all. We sent thanks to the commandant and the gate-guard left his high-piled plate to let us out. The great door locked shut on the strange abbey of Fontevrault.

Back on the valley road of the Loire, in scarcely two kilometres we turned and followed the softly wooded Vienne on its southern bank looking for the bridge to Chinon.

It was on this bosky road where the very houses seemed leafy and the river's reflections doubled the waterside trees, that we came to the one sign-board,

at a solitary and diverging road, that would have sent us the wrong way. Our map showed a byroad curving to the left for a bridge; we knew the bridge existed centuries ago for it was the king's route. Here was a sign turning us up on the hills to the right for Chinon. We debated running back to the Loire and ferrying the Vienne. At this moment a motor-drawn caravan of fair-players came slowly in sight behind us; they too were Chinon-bound. The wind had whirled the sign on the post! We were soon on Henry Plantagenet's bridge, up a rise over many arches to an island, then down the other slope. Chinon's tree-set, river-facing street was before us, the old town of Rabelais, all crooked streets and antique houses, behind its veneer of half-modern river-front. All this part of town nestled close under the green bank, crowned by its three ruined castles, bound together in an apparent mile of tower and wall and keep and turret.

There was a sense of the fitting that the inn should be good in a Rabelaisian town. The long table was filled with men devoted to eating. The mystery is ever in French towns to know why so many men are traveling. It is not to look at châteaux or scenery. Henry James solved it by calling half of them vintners. Stevenson called them bagmen. Stendhal called them *commis voyageurs.* It seems to be a merit, not a disgrace in France to eat as Gargantua ate. The host of the inn watched the pythonizing

with happy smiles. Five substantial *hors-d'œuvres,* a fish, two meats, sundry small vegetables, cheese, bread, wine, fruit and coffee disappeared from in front of them. Turpin, the chronicler telling of Charlemagne, who could eat two fowls, a goose, a peacock, a crane or a whole hare, whose girdle was eight spans, and all Rabelais' tales of the repletions of his hero, seemed to find expression in the gusto with which food disappeared this November day before these Frenchmen in Chinon. The very coffee was not coffee, it was a potion of power!

A good driving road led to the ruined fortress of Chinon. The guardian, a cheerful old woman, lived in the keep, under an ancient clock. All the roofs were off except the one that sheltered her. We found ourselves in a garden with paths, set with cypresses and glistening greenery walking on the grass through history, through halls of the Plantagenets and Philip de Commines quarters, for he was the king's governor here, high honor for an early historian. We walked the wall with all the broad Vienne in beauty below us.

The canopied fireplace on the wall, in the floorless, roofless hall where Jeanne d'Arc stood before the king, made Chinon live in the mind's eye. The blue sky, the wall-flowers clinging to the stones, the untouched, unspoiled ruins, the cold hearth clinging on the wall were the scene for the disheartened Charles VII, defeated at Agincourt, Paris lost to

him, his heritage slipping from him, laughed at as "King of Bourges," meeting here a peasant girl who had seen a vision and finding inspiration in her. France ever lives with visions.

The highway was straight on from Chinon to Tours, and though the old and long-traveled route was a village and château bordered one close to the Loire, we took the shorter road, for it traveled the royal forest of Chinon, the scene of the boar hunts and stag hunts of the ancient royalty of France in the days when they rode hard. The wide road passed through the green forest, with a long straight vista ahead. Great evergreens and oaks, beeches with soft grey boles, made a solitary forest roadside for miles. Wild black boars were still in the forest, but the long leap of a hare and a few solitary brown-clad huntsmen were all to be seen as survivals of its ancient traditions.

The forest highway descended at last quickly to a picturesque bridge over the river Indre with its sweet, clustering, river-bordering, stone town, and its gentle sunning, unfortified, happy-looking château, Azay-le-Rideau. It was worth a long journey to approach the white stones of Azay from the western, sylvan side, to come upon its exquisite beauty after the solitary forest; to stand on the little *rond* on the bridge over the close-bordered green river and look over the low meadow-park at the quiet cone-topped towers. The place is exquisite in its

never-ruined beauty; it is a cared-for jewel in stone. It has no horrors in its history, only the initial violence that Francis I seized it from his tax-gatherer just as it was finished. Francis had a passion for Renaissance châteaux, his own or others.

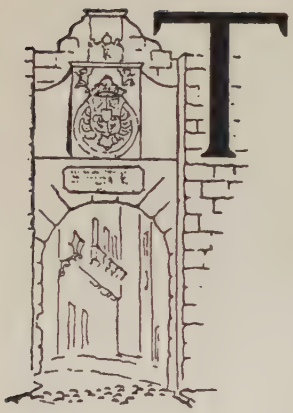
Azay-le-Rideau is owned by the state as an historic monument, a generous gift as shown by the mysterious words at the gate: *Leg Dru*—the Dru bequest. It was only a few years ago a treasure house of old portraits, a sentient thing—and "when the armchair is by the fireside" the effect is magical and delightful. Again, its charm fell on us as we ascended its great stone stair, and saw its fair, fine rooms, its paneled walls, its glorious chimneypieces.

All the way on to Tours the road had trees marking distant château settings over by the Loire bank.

We entered through the intricacies of Joué-lès-Tours and the bridge across the Cher, into the old city, the heart of the royal province of Touraine, Balzac's "town more smiling, loving, flowery, fragrant than all the other towns of the world," his own loved birthplace, Tours.

CHAPTER XI

SOUTH FROM TOURS



THERE certainly was not a better centre in France than Tours for such an expeditionary force as ours! The Rue Royale, as the Tourangeaux still affectionately call what has been the Rue Nationale for many a republican year, is an even-built, eighteenth-century street of shops. We found modernity breaking into it here and there with colored marble and gaudy paint, detracting from its white, even dignity; it was a street that made the observant Englishman Young in his travels in the 1780's stop to say its regular plan should be compulsory, that made Balzac, born in it, regard it as most lively and livable. Behind this wide street were mazes of older ones, dominated on the east by the cathedral on an open *place,* with its setting of beauty, its flying buttresses, the great nave, the old yellow rose window, the little children of Anne de Bretagne in marble. These little children, sculptured so peacefully, expressed the futility of the ambitious plans of Anne and Louis XII. Returning from the conquest of Naples he

found his young dauphin dead, else Francis I would never have been the king.

There was a strong personality to things in Tours. The old houses have a physiognomy all their own. In a short ride we passed the isolated church towers of St. Martin, called so because the cloak-sharing saint was buried here, and one called Charlemagne's because he buried his wife under it. We circled past a marble fountain all dolphins in honor of Anne's son, the dauphin, she was so proud of. In his honor it used to run with wine on great days. We saw a wild black boar hanging at the cookshop door. Men were having their hair curled at the hair-dresser's. We peered into courtyards where bankers house themselves in sixteenth-century beauty and hunted up Tristan l'Hermite's so-called house sinisterly rope-rung and spike-bedotted, to puzzle incredulous antiquaries.

In the outskirts, placed between the Cher and the Loire, in low land now poorly used, we found Plessis-lès-Tours, a royal abode not only of Louis XI but of the court in Valois days, of Francis I and of Marie Stuart. Her appanage as wife and widow of Francis II was Touraine. The income from this part of France reached her from the faithful French Ambassador in her English prisons when Queen Elizabeth was offering her old clothes.

One after another decries Plessis-lès-Tours and reproaches its poor surroundings, but there re-

mained a goodly brick and stone fragment, a stair caged in a hexagonal tower, a nestling tourelle, a long gable, a donjon. It repaid us to remember Sir Walter Scott never saw it in describing its grim horrors in Quentin Durward.

We planned to follow the Loire in the spring and to be off at this season for the Pyrenees, a distant destination, but Loches was our immediate one. It was while we were under the great elms of the parkway—Tours got rid of its town walls for this two centuries ago—that a new road experience befell us. Having no precedent in meeting whippet tanks, we used the road rule for fire engines and drew to the side and stopped. Serving a double purpose, it got us out of the way,—they looked to be bad opponents in a collision,—and it gave a chance to see them in action. Five followed the first, each traveling on its own endless chain of jointed band. Green, brown and black in color, speckled in patches, in their curious creep they seemed to be carrying their roadway with them. Two men were atop under a part like a teakettle lid, out of which bristled the noses of machine guns. They slammed a little door upon themselves and as for traffic the wayfarer must look out for himself.

The confusing habit of French cities is to change the name of a perfectly straight street. Thus the Rue Nationale is the Rue Grammont after it crosses this parkway and out it we went to the River Cher,

toward which Tours is reaching in its living. Women pushed carts home from selling vegetables while great dogs tugged at straps on the axles, sharing their toil. The bread-boy in his cart notched tallies on his bunch of willow wands to record the varying sales of daily bread. The bridge had a slight "*dos*," a back, or rise in the middle. We mounted a hill to the right although we well knew we should be going to the left; but found this an economy in road building as far as the summit. It was on the high ground that we saw indications in many fields that something had been hauled away. It was not brick-clay but shell-like stones, a deposit from some old ocean bed of disintegrating sea-shells, valued as a natural fertilizer.

The houses were built of shaly stones through the countryside here. In less than twenty kilometres from Tours we came into the great, green plain of the Indre, the river of George Sand's romances, which was crossed at Cormery by a causeway and stone bridge, bordered by stone posts with chains draped very regularly and effectively between. Great walnut trees now grew beside the road, trees of undisturbed growth and rounded beauty, as if, perhaps, a walnut tree would not endure a yearly topping. We also noticed that nut-bearing trees are trusted on the open roadside.

In the distance stood a square ruin surmounted by a statue, where parents pray their children shall be

kept from harm. Below it were two villages, Montbazon and Couzières, where was the château of the Duchess of Montbazon, a beautiful woman whom many loved. The tower and château are associated with the Abbé de Rance who retired to LaTrappe, in the most isolated part of Normandy. There he lived in silence, austerity and poverty, on his table a skull, until he died in 1708—a subject fascinating to his portrait makers and his biographer, Châteaubriand. The Abbé had been gay and happy; he was a scholar but he rode and hunted and had a lodge at Veretz on the Indre. It was not far through a woody south-going road from Veretz to Couzières. He had horses and kennels and the Duchess was a great horsewoman. When he went to see her they often had supper from a silver dish.

To forget her he went to Italy but hurried back. The room was dimly lit with two tall candles. She was not there to meet him but there was the silver dish. He raised the lid and her beautiful head was inside. Crazed he ran with it to the woods and hid in the tower of Montbazon. Then he sold all he had and became a Trappist. Ever by him night and day was the hollow skull which even Châteaubriand firmly believed was that of his beloved Duchess.

Loches was entered by a long, half modern highway; its old part clusters around a clock-towered arch from which a fascinating narrow road beckoned

one up past houses with astonishingly beautiful details, their windows framed in stone with fleur-de-lys and escutcheons. There were balconies of delicately wrought iron on curves like the front of a serpentine desk, of a loveliness that brought us to a standstill on the steep hill.

Within the portcullis, where we left the car, an astonishing area was seen to be enclosed, with a church, a château, a donjon, a fortress and their attendant gardens.

The twelfth-century church stands "unique in a world of savage beauty" according to French architects. For instead of a slate or tile roof—we are just on the boundary between the blue slates of the north of France and the realm of the mellow, reddish-yellow tiles of the south—it was covered by immense pyramids of stone, cut in fish-scale patterns, under the hollows of which were the nave and other parts of the church. It thus had a back like a great armadillo, covered with huge upstanding points. Inside the church correspondingly astonishing cavities soared upward overhead, while its great door was round arched and adequate.

The bell sounded out over the hill as if its days were nearly spent. Its broken vibration recalled the dismay its monks felt when they asked Louis XI to remove the bones of Agnes Sorel from their chapel. They thought it in bad taste to have a king's favorite in their holy place. He agreed—but wily fox, he

THE RENAISSANCE TOWN-HALL OF LOCHES

Lateen Sails in a Harbor Built for the Crusades

The Cloisters of St. Trophime, Arles

also suggested her endowments must trouble them. He would remove both worries.

We rambled to one end of the plateau following a black and pointing hand marked Donjon, through an old parade ground, with trees clipped and gnarled into umbrellas of shade. The little keeper of the Plantagenet stronghold and of Louis XI's donjon, uniformed and tippeted, lived up to his work. His purpose in life was to make his hearers feel all he felt. When we stood within the four-square hollow walls of the Plantagenet keep and looked up through the forty metres of stone to the open sky—when his measured syllables told the walls were four metres thick, we verified; when he told it was *brulé* and all the floors and roof went down, we had a neighborly feeling of distress for the conflagration and could not help but picture what a draft there must have been as the fire went up and out though he did not supply that idea!

Loches had the donjons of France superlative above others; both the kings who filled them and the men who were there were those whom the world remembers.

Early in our descent we came to Philip de Commines' embrasure in a thick wall barred by a heavy oak and iron lattice very terribly set across it. His name—he is good reading to-day—shed lustre on the reign of two kings, Louis XI and Charles VIII. It was a woman's literary criticism put him here, be-

cause as regent, she didn't like what he wrote. De Commines must have slept on the ledge, eaten on it, —but stretch out he couldn't. Always in sight were six *Ecossaises,* not Frenchmen, whom he might sway. Their beds, four slanting bins in one framework, were curious survivals, the furniture of the kilted guards of four hundred years ago.

The dungeons of Loches descended far. They were the careful elaboration in the solid rock, of the inventive imagination of Louis XI.

There were places all black, clawed out of the solid rock with hidden oubliettes, baited with opportunity of escape.

There were no made-up horrors here, no dressing up of tragedy. We descended to a dome-topped prison, one with a circular stone floor and very inadequate light. On the stone stair were oak doors of open grating with the original bolts and hinges, the very keys and locks that sounded on the captives' ears in the fifteenth century. Creepier still was the lurking place of King Louis XI, who could slip down from chapel and have a quiet gloat over de la Balue hanging in his bird cage in this cage-shaped room.

When I first saw this dungeon the cage was there! Iron bound, strong, oak-latticed and terrible in its cramping and stunted size, in its solidity and horror. It is now in Cluny museum for preservation. There are those who say de la Balue never was in the

cage that he is credited with having invented to please his king. But the sinister order in the king's accounts exists and gives the maker's name Guion, the price, sixty livres, the material and the purpose "for the surety of the person of the cardinal of Angers" and Commines records seeing him in it! It is curious to learn how this intimate of Louis, his minister of state, once in the cage, ever got out alive. Louis XI was stricken speechless and helpless for a month. When speech came back he let Cardinal Balue out of the donjon of Loches!

Then came Louis XII's *cachot,* for his victim Ludovico Sforza, prisoner of war, he, who was friend and patron of Leonardo da Vinci, who gallantly set the Chevalier Bayard on his horse and bade him ride free, when Bayard was trapped in an open attack at the gate of Milan; he whose pale, proud face stilled crowded town streets as he rode in sombre black on a mule, a prisoner to Loches. He had a stone room with a barrel roof and lived in prison for nine years. His tragedy so impressed itself on his world and those who came after, that this room stands to-day with his sad words where he lettered them: "Fortune I have not." He drew a helmet with a gay feather and scratched another with a nail. One day they opened the door and told Ludovico Sforza he could go free and on the worn stones by the door he died for joy.

So perched was this whole stronghold of Loches

on the summit of a rock that on all sides there were views, from the promenades on the walls, over miles of green and charming country. The level plain, with the quiet brimming river Indre, stretched away for miles and miles with fertile fields, with rows of slim poplar trees, level in a curious flatness, away to hilly banks and deep woods. It was looking over this country that we walked under the façade of the small château, under the halls of Charles VII and the tower where Agnes Sorel lived and where her tomb with her gentle face and little lambs at her feet was moved in Louis XVI's time; under windows where James V of Scotland courted Madeline of France before he took her home to Scotland. And there was the part that Louis XII built for a home where he could enjoy his dogs, for his dogs are carved in stone on every flowing window top and on the roof, not monumental ones, but lifelike spaniels and setters and terriers, sitting on gable edges, dozens of them. Under Louis XII's façade on the terrace over the Indre, two queens should have *place aux dames.* In this part, Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII of England, came as second queen to Louis XII and with her came another young girl as maid of honor who here saw the life of the French court. She was Anne Boleyn, whose pearl-decked hair and beauty caused such curious things in the world's history. Mary Tudor and Anne Boleyn were back in England soon, for Louis XII died.

To make Anne Boleyn queen, Henry VIII put himself at the head of the English church and Anne Boleyn's daughter's rule was the longest and best known in English history;—a long distance from this sunny, dog-lover's terrace but not far for poor Anne Boleyn to go in her life.

We felt like loitering long on the terrace and in the garden and measured the wide-spreading *marronier,* Francis I's chestnut tree. The monarch's old monarch of a tree was eighty-four feet across its spread of branches. It stood in dignity covering the whole garden; it made one glad Francis planted it so that it might stand before kings.

We went our way through the portcullis to find a peaceful cat asleep in the car after having made muddy white pat marks on every available black part. We left Loches on a narrow route under the fortified walls, softened now in outline by round bunches of clinging pink valerian. It was on this day's run we saw men making a success of doing two things at once. One carter was driving two carts, one after the other.

Our road from Loches lay southwest toward Poitiers and gave a curious sense of departure from the garden-like land of Touraine. The fields were open with great flocks of fine sheep in unfenced but shepherded security. The oaks held their withered yellow leaves, and all afternoon we saw deep black woods of pines with dense under-shadows. It was

the scene of the battle called Tours, here on this countryside toward Poitiers, where the Saracens were turned back by a hammering fight that left them dead by thousands and earned the name Martel for the victor. There are still fields where the grass is shunned that have the tradition of infidels beneath the sod.

The sunset light was in the sky as we went through sharp-cornered, shabby Ligueil, a small place with confusing streets. It was here we asked the way to Chatellerault where we knew we could spend the night in comfort.

"Oh, we regret! Châteauroux can best be reached the way from which you came."

We knew something was the matter. We realized a curious thing—it is always about to be dark when roads and road maps fail. We went on to read the sign-posts at the next corner. Chatellerault was marked ahead, Châteauroux back. We remembered how many Azay-le-somethings there were on the map; that there was a Loir and a Loire but chastened this faultfinding spirit by recalling we had a Newark and New York at two ends of a short route!

The miles of open road were of yellowish stone, making a tawny surface when wet, from which a fine spray rose as we traveled, covering our bag protectors and even the back window with a mist of thin mud, but we were glad to be under a blue sky and we faced a glorious sunset although the hour was

only four. It was on a height before descending to the riverside village of La Haye that we were struck by the beauty of the great open view, the fertile orderliness of this new river valley, the graceful poplars in their long slender and isolated woodland rows. Stopping to look on the map to see how crooked La Haye was going to be, we found this spot marked with the twenty radiant, fuzzy blue lines, by which French map-makers mark a famous view—we had stopped at it from sheer admiration, without knowing its renown.

La Haye had a bridge that had to be looked for—always an important point in an unknown country-side—over the Creuse, a fork of the Vienne. It was their double valley we commanded on the height and these were the upper waters of the wooded river we had followed to reach Chinon. It was in the streets of this little La Haye that we came plump upon a set of low, white gates across the road like a flower-garden fence. The railroad passed through the village without offering other disturbance than these white gates and spread no dirt and destruction in its wake.

One of us went up to the little begardened house of the keeper whose gates were ready for trains. It was on the main street of a sizable village.

"Won't you come out and open the gates?"

"Oh, no, madame—we wait for the train!"

CHAPTER XII

THE LAND OF LIMOUSIN

WE were sitting in the road waiting for the white railroad gate to be slipped back on its wheels. Dusk was settling, the only place to sleep was thirty kilometres ahead. It would have been of no avail for us to have tried to change their gentle, firm complacency.

Uniforms are everywhere in France. No longer is it "the little red legs" that used to light up the landscape. They have gone and horizon-blue, very tightly wrapped, supplants the red that came down from the scarlet tunics of the Roman legions.

A slender youth in soldier's blue, home over Sunday, came to tell us of a turn to the invisible bridge, and then straight on, *tout droit.* This is just as we say: "Right on" and must be listened for carefully for *à droit* is to the right. What interest he took when he remembered a fork where we might go wrong. In the course of time a small train puffed through and the gates were rolled back.

At the ancient bridge over the quiet river we saw an almost submerged island of brilliant yellow oziers. All the lovers in La Haye were out walk-

ing in the pleasant Sunday twilight and seemed to find a destination at this arched bridge and in looking at the oziers. Something made them all very happy,—maybe it was the evening landscape on the river.

Across the green and meadowy country, beside the Vienne, we traveled, a direct road until the forest-backed chimneys of Chatellerault came near. We entered a prosperous, white-streeted town with our lights on, running alongside a plane-tree esplanade, looking for the hotel. We found the usual arch and old coach yard here under a gnarled and canopying wistaria. This is the firearms and cutlery-making centre of France. So well do they manage all their smokeless manufacture that it remains in mind as a town both white and clean. Who could so remember Sheffield or for that matter Bridgeport! The hotel was warm, the dinner perfect, and both here and at Loches a comfiture of yellow plums was offered with the cheese, a local epicurean *ensemble,* which we did not encounter elsewhere in France.

In the morning we kept on under the plane trees and over the Vienne on Henry IV's bridge and by some picturesque round towers, just the kind to enjoy without having to know any more about them.

The high road was by the river under a bank where a forest rose above our heads; all offering wonderful reflections of trees in the mirroring depths, nearing Poitiers. Buff-colored oxen were on the sloping

fields, for it was a land of heavy soil and slow work. We began to see the withered stalks of flax in the fields just being garnered. All this country was the *pays* of George Sand and the peasants were the "grown-up children" of her one hundred and twenty books. It was she to whom Balzac ascribed style in capitals and Flaubert called "the old troubadour singing of perfect love."

Poitiers is fortunate in its entry being by a most romantic road on the very level of the river under a rocky cliff, half natural rock and half retaining wall. This held a wooded hillside with well-kept houses in among the trees, while on the left was a long line of waterside terraces and clipped and shading trees, in a series of river-set gardens with reflections in the quiet water of the sky and the tall svelte poplars feathered to their feet.

Donkeys whose ears seemed a third their height drew minute carts with bundles of brilliant oziers, yellow and bronze. Basket-making is an occupation everywhere, a merchandise constantly seen. There are durable baskets for every purpose. The baskets in which vegetables come to market have inverted drums; eggs, chickens, fruit, bread—a basket, strong and suitable is specialized for each.

Arriving from the northeast into Poitiers we found ourselves in a mesh of tracks where stood a crenelated tower like a chessman in the traffic; its name was Solitaire. We were faced by the problem

of which way to turn. It was none the easier that a tippeted and be-batoned policeman gallantly held up all the carts and fluttering pedestrians until we decided. We wanted to get up on the hill where towers and church roofs were serrated against the sky, but only muddy basse-ville streets offered. The policeman waved us down the greyest, with many flourishes as if he knew intuitively what we wanted. It was narrow and engulfed us from all view of the upper town. Everybody seemed engaged either in rolling barrels in dark archways or peering into bungholes. One man rattled chains in his cask-washing. We asked for a route up. *Pour aller à* is a clear phrase. He sent us up a narrow street that ought to have been a stair, but we emerged on a well-graded ramp, up the side of the cliff.

Poitiers is prosperous, but was once greater and is still far-flung in its plan. A motor is an admirable adjunct in the complexities of finding its five renowned buildings. We wanted to see the great hall of Poitiers first. There are only a few great halls that have survived the centuries. Poitiers holds its hall in the class of the Salone in Padua, St. Stephens and the Guild Hall in London and the one at Mont St. Michel. It is called the *Salle des Pas Perdus.* Absent-mindedly we asked for the Hotel de Ville, while meaning to say the Palais de Justice and so landed ourselves in front of every public building in Poitiers. When we climbed a long flight of stone

steps to a classic portico, it was with the feeling that no 1300 hall could find shelter there. But that was its masking face. Within was a stone hall, one hundred and sixty feet long, with great walls and round arched arcades on them, a hall forty feet high to its great oak-timbered roof. Across one end rose ten stone steps to a raised dais, where side by side were three great-throated fireplaces, crested and carved with armorial bearings. Above these, across the whole hall end ran a gallery of openwork stone and to the roof rose three flamboyant windows, the stone exquisitely flowing in curves. The curious point is what becomes of the smoke from the fireplaces. It did not go up in the corners for the builders had placed spiral staircases there. It was built to puzzle.

No cheerful fires burn there now. Lawyers use it as a place of interview. It made one wish for the days of dukes and kings when wood was heaped high in three fires, in three fireplaces, side by side; it must have offered a very intimate comfort to those on the dais. "The trickling doublets, the stiffened fingers, the rheumatic shanks, that must have been presented to such an incomparable focus of heat"—is a satisfying picture of the room end.

It was built by Duke Jean, uncle of the King, Charles VI, and contemporary of Du Guesclin, about half a century after the battle of Poitiers, when the land was again in French hands. The great day

of this hall was that on which Charles VII, a youth of twenty, was here proclaimed king—he for whom Jeanne d'Arc did her heroic leading.

There were more rooms, beyond in the old castle, now curiously shorn of its pinnacles and tower and pushed down by a veritable box-lid of a new roof into utilitarian offices. The guide, whose keys were necessary to go beyond the great hall, had viewed us as we puzzled over the smoke and his first work was to lead us through long stone passages to a window. *Voici!* he said in triumph. There were three chimneys emerging on the gable top. He feared we couldn't see. A strong man, he suspended us in turn out the window ledge, that we might see the flue that was ducally and adeptly disguised! He had another enthusiasm. He took us into a Gothic room, groined in pointed arches, resting on three stone pillars down the centre of the room, whose walls were four metres thick—thirteen feet of stone. But these deep walls were so acutely cut back and each cut so met the next, around the three sides of the room opposite the chimney, that no shadow ever fell in the entire room. This seemed impossible when proposed to us, but the lightness, the elegance of this stone room, its mastery of cheerfulness fascinated us, as did its entrances and exits—narrow doors set in the corners. Through one of these doors came Jeanne d'Arc to be quizzed and looked over before she went on to Orleans.

Here in this castle lived the court of France. Poitiers was the capital. They feel the distinction of it yet—not the capital of some gathered-in province, but of France. They also claim that stormy lady, Elinor of Acquitaine, queen of France and queen of England, as their very own, she whose dower rights caused a hundred years of war.

We were let out at a grille from which we were supposed to find the car more easily than by the modern façade. It took twenty minutes of wandering in the old, entertaining streets, with courtyards of the 1500's, and peering down others, to locate the particular narrow way in which we had stowed the car. An added resolve from this experience was always to leave a building by the door of entry.

These old cities with histories from the Romans down are usually perched places and offer violent declivities. The cathedral that looked high when we saw it from the river was reached by a narrow steep street. The cathedral faces a square; it was entered by descending ten steps. It seemed a hall more than a church, for its aisles were as high as its nave and the ceiling was half-way between dome and vault, a Plantagenet invention characteristic of this part of France. Henry II of England, he who lies in Fontevrault, built this church, for he was Duke of Acquitaine. The cathedral narrowed slightly on its aisles and nave and the vaulting dipped too, to increase the perspective. The 1100's were surely

astonishingly early, to be dabbling in problems of perspective.

Up by the altar two nuns in white head dresses and blue gowns were on their knees with little work-baskets beside them, mending a rug. Small hexagons of cloth were overheaded together in a glorious pattern forty feet square, blended geometrically. Altar carpets in old churches are often interesting. Some are orientals of great antiquity, often they are Aubusson, here it was home-made.

The side door of the cathedral—we were breaking our resolve about doors within an hour—let us out to look for the baptistry quite naturally named for St. John. It has the reputation of being the oldest Christian building in France. We descended steps into the fourth century. The dust of the ages had risen around it, the trolley and the highway girdled it. The alluvium of time had been clawed away from its walls so that it now sat in a pit. It was built of tawny brick-shaped stones, tile-roofed, pedimented at its gables, lit by small round windows, and had two oven-like excrescences on its ends. This was the fourth architectural curiosity Poitiers had for us.

We went to Notre Dame La Grande, thinking what is called the pearl of Poitiers would have to be wonderful, indeed, to earn distinction here. From a colorful setting of gay tarpaulins of green and ochre and baskets of carrots and cabbages rose a

small Byzantine façade intricately carved. Individual and tawny, a gable of modest height was shouldered up by two towers, covered with those same fish-scale stones we had seen at Loches, but all so modest in height as to be lower than the point of the gable. The round-arched central portal had four diminishing curves of compacted little animals carved in stone, each design of which was set on radiating lines. Thirty-two hunched-up horse-like griffons arched as borders over side doorways. Above these three portals ran two arcades all intricate like old silversmiths' work, curiously different from the Gothic churches of the north. There were aisles so narrow we could span them, but it was by this façade the old building was memorable, it was more, it was unforgetable.

Limoges seemed a possible destination for the night. It meant over one hundred and fifty kilometres but there did not appear to be a place between. The bridge was three-arched across the Vienne, almost old enough to be the one over which the French came in panic and rout, harried by the Black Prince from the field of Poitiers.

We went up a long hill, past a walled graveyard out of which fifty funereal cypresses made exclamation points against the sky. On the high ground was the field of the famous English victory. We thought of the Black Prince and his helmet with the leopard's tail worn at Poitiers, a hero's armor as it hangs

above his tomb in Canterbury, but on the field of battle we fought and fled with the French!

Converging roads approach Poitiers across this upland battlefield and so open was the landscape we could see carts trotting in toward town on four of the radiants and we were on a fifth. So desirous were we of getting a start on our way, we had had no luncheon. Every group of buildings on the road proved innless; one had a manor with gates and a fine *marronier,* with a seat around it, but no inn. The day was glorious, the walnut trees were bronze and the beeches were a brilliant yellow, as they began to sere. Our hope lay in the one village of L'Hommaize. Hungry and happy we saw the word "Hotel" above a lusty grape-vine espaliered right and left along its whitewashed front. Two old women, each in a white cap, sat at a neat round table. It promised well to us whose coffee and slim roll was a bygone of five hours before.

We had entered the wrong door. One of them with a cheery, brisk manner opened the adjoining door of the inn. This room had a brick floor, a beamed ceiling, and a good fire on the hearth on iron dogs with rings in them. There was a heavy oak table and two forms in place at it. A young woman stood looking rather helplessly at us. The little old woman flew at her in rapid French. "See, there is always *jambon*—you can fry potatoes. You have a fire!"

"No, no fire. Not for three days. I cook for the good man on the logs!"

Madame was indignant, "You have bread!" I suggested eggs. "No, not one, but,"—brightening —"I have *pate!*" She had *foie gras!* I suggested coffee. She laid two plates and fluttered a pot of water onto the embers and piled wood around it. A little sister was set at work with the bellows. The old woman was still with us. "You were thinking of an omelet. *Bien!*" and removing our plates she issued whispered orders and departed. The order was for a cloth and the best napkins. These being laid we began on our *foie gras* and bread—an extravagance at home, here a commonplace. Repletion expressed our condition, when open came the door and in came madame with linen-covered plates.

"*Voila!*" and a golden *omelette-aux-fines-herbes* was before us. And "*Voila!*"—she produced them as a conjurer from a hat—and before us was a plate of native white grapes and little apples called *mignons* of renowned and super-excellent flavor.

We had to eat everything! We couldn't do less. She gave a quick look at the fire. The water had not boiled but she galvanized the young woman into action with a look, the bellows pumped, the coffee mill burred.

"Would you like to come to see my house before your coffee?" This was said with the grace of a *grande dame.* We were delighted. It was a step

down below the road. She showed us her armoire with shelves of exactly-set linens and her coffer in the corner past the fireplace with her dishes and provisions in it. Her small wood fire, the round table with the four egg-shells and the minced parsley of the omelet were there. She showed us her row of shiny copper saucepans, her bed in the corner by the window, over which hung bed curtains of gay toile, in a ruffled crown. She pulled up the bedclothes and showed us, one, two, three, she counted them as she lifted their corners, six mattresses and the usual down cushion on top!

She must sleep well there! "Ah!" she said. "What is better than a good bed!" "What indeed!" we said. "You have a climb to get in, madame!" And this climb started her on a tale. The coffee was getting a good chance. She had been in Rochelle on the border of the sea, and in the night the house burned up and four people were *brulé;* her "r" gave it an awful sound. But God guarded her and the *pompiers* came and lowered her thirty metres on a rope! "Me! and how old do you think I am?"

One seeks to please in such conversational opportunity. "Oh, perhaps sixty!" we said. "I am seventy-eight—married at eighteen and kept that inn for fifty-seven years! But I was always ready. You see travelers will come. I have told her she should be ready!"

She wanted nothing for her eggs—she did it from her heart. In the war Americans were in that field —her forefinger showed us—and used to come in every day and they were always *"gentil."* How much she made that word express. She took us back to our coffee and wished us good health and safety and many, cheery, happy things. On the road we found she had put a little bag of *mignons* behind the camera.

That afternoon all the trees had balls of mistletoe, great three-foot spheres on them; all the white geese with their brilliant yellow bills were out and the ganders hissed us bravely to protect their snowy convoys. As we passed the roadside houses the cats and puppies, dogs and chickens were out sunning themselves in the reflected heat from the walls. Creamy oxen hauled carts with ponderous wheels. There were little shepherdesses, not Watteau's kind, but diligent, sweet young girls in wooden shoes, standing out against the brown oak hedgerows with their silver and black sheep.

After descending a green-bordered hill under the town of Bellac our road was very directly laid toward Limoges, over highlands with great trees and long descending valleys. Mile after mile, the word park-like best expressed its beauty of close-clipped turf, of evenly planted roadside trees, of English ivy and holly gleaming at us with their glistening green. There were no haughty silhouettes against the sky,

no fortressed crags, no sunny châteaux basking in their water gardens. We had become so accustomed to châteaux on every vantage in the valley of the Loire, we thought it would be so all over France.

We had left the thatch and romance of Brittany and the cottages of rural Touraine. There were now squarish stuccoed houses rather bare, with red tile roofs, not gabled but flat. Such houses might have color but they lacked beauty of outline.

We entered Limoges at dusk. All were out on the pavements as is the way in all factory towns. We found a garage more distant than before in our experience but it is the agreeable French custom to send a young hallman on the running board with motoring strangers to show the garage if it is not under the roof.

Limoges lay crescent-shaped on the banks of the Vienne and had a diffused air, a lack of city grouping. Its great age could be seen in its timber houses on minor streets. Balzac says some of these little shops have not changed from the Middle Ages, and some of the tradesmen keep to themselves and intermarry only in their own class, and are a race by themselves like the Jews.

The history of the city is one long tale of woe. The Black Prince sacked it, plague and famine did their worst, the religious wars brought ruin, a great fire swept over it. Phœnix-like it has risen on the fires of its forty porcelain factories. The nations of

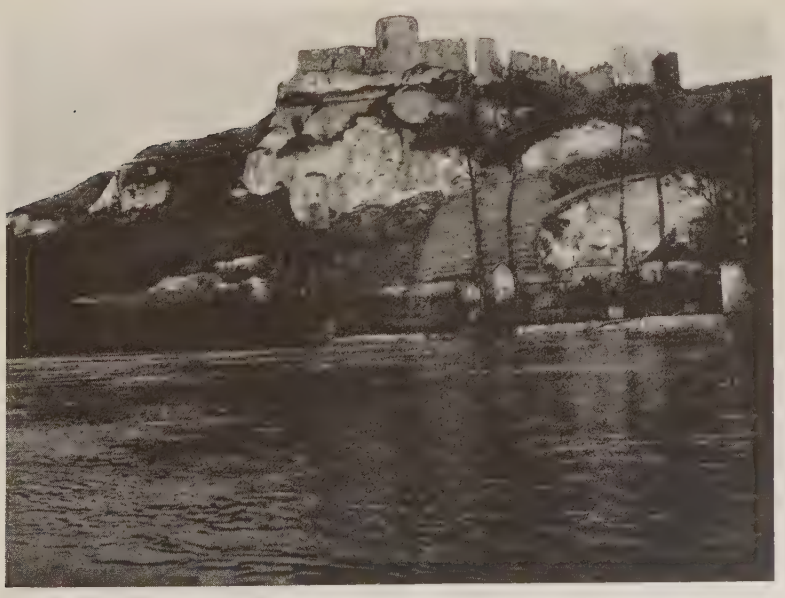
the earth eat from its plates, but it is not black or smudged with smoke. Their kaolin comes from neighboring St. Yrieux, but coal is brought from far England and the Ruhr, so local wood helps to fire all their kilns.

To Americans the most interesting works in Limoges are the Haviland. They were from Vermont and are still American citizens in the third generation. In 1849 the founder was a china importer in New York who saw the advantages of an American-owned factory in Limoges.

A homey, domesticated-looking museum held in barred and guarded security the masterpieces of the old enamelers of Limoges. Leonard Limousin and his confrères were masters in a curious craft. They laid their enamels on bits of copper and made their pearly colors and deep, blue-black backgrounds tell the classic myths and saintly episodes in such beauty that kings quarreled over them and churches grew famous from their possession.

Such obliging enthusiasm had the citizens of Limoges that one walked half a mile with us to be sure we had the right approach to the museum. A cab-driver was so anxious we should see the cathedral, St. Martial's,—their own saint—he wanted to continue the drive to the door for nothing. At the garage where the car was being washed and seen to, fourteen sympathizers, not *gamins* but men with —as Franklin phrased it—" not a poor coat among

Chalus, an Arrow from Whose Tower Killed
Richard Coeur de Lion



Richard's Castle at Les Andelys

Pierrots Dancing in Languedoc

A Ruined Garden by Le Notre Near Montpellier

them," put their noses as nearly under the hood as space permitted.

It was Franklin after nine years in France who also wisely said they have "the art of making themselves beloved by strangers."

CHAPTER XIII

ROCAMADOUR

BY the time we reached the Limousin our journey was into a seldom-visited part of France. Our forward horizon had additional interest as it was wholly unknown to either of us for the next five hundred miles.

Leaving Limoges we followed the bent arc of the Vienne in its brimming course. The river looked at all points very natural and unspoiled though the water poured in smooth, curving sheets over the dams between verdured banks. The sawmills did not spoil the landscape of soft reflections doubled in the stream.

At Aixe-sur-Vienne, the country became hilly and at last we definitely identified a large communal forest, high on the hills, such as many towns in France possess. The country now had a mountain character at every mile and there were peaks in the distance toward the east. Miles and miles of open country were in view with the finest trees thus far, oaks and beeches, chestnuts and walnuts, the beeches brilliant with frost-struck yellow leaves.

It was thus we came to Chalus, watching for it in

a long approach without other villages. Suddenly as we slipped down a long hill there stood a tall cylinder of stone gaunt against the sky. There Richard Cœur de Lion came to claim treasure-trove found by the lord of the tower. There he was shot in the shoulder by an arrow as he stood on a stone in the stream. The castle of Chalus surrendered. The furious soldiers burned the man who shot the arrow. It was a grim place to end such a career as his; born in Oxford, king in England, crusader in the East, prisoner in Austria, stormer of Loches, the very name of his wife was glorious, Berengaria of Navarre. *"O Richard! O mon roi, l'univers l'abandonne!"* as the old air had it.

There are some old ruins we should like to know more about. This tower had that taunt to interest. Cæsar Borgia was once master here, long afterwards, for Chalus was the portion of his French bride whom he went off and forgot, and long years it was his daughter's after he was gone but no bright page of its history comes down to us.

At the crossroads we saw that the other direction of the tower-road was marked St. Yrieux. It lies under the shoulder of the mountains of the Limousin. There France has buried treasure in the kaolin, found by an old doctor on a neighbor's shoe heels. By tracing the white clay he brought the prosperity of the porcelain industry to his countrymen.

We left Chalus through a most melancholy planta-

tion of dank trees as if a promenade had been planned but no one had ever walked in it, and ruin had fallen as on the tower. No châteaux had been in sight save the ruins of Chalus. We passed no vehicles but those drawn by great oxen, side by side, moving as one, thonged by their horns to a frame and doing all their pull by the top bones of their heads. The oxen moved curiously as if their eight legs moved by one impulse.

It was here on the hilly pastures we saw hooded shepherds with their sheep. It is from their humble capes with hoods they can pull up over their heads and thus keep dry, called a *limousin,* characteristic of this countryside, that we have our word "limousine," the covered-over motor car. What a span from this cold peasant, a shepherd on a wet pasture, to the costliest type of luxurious motor, named from his hood!

About one-third the way to Perigueux, we rose to an upland, brush-bearing barren. The only sign of human life was here and there a clearing for wattle-making where oak saplings were cut and split into sticks, to sell for wattle fences and for vineyard stakes. The workers lived in low-set huts in the brushwood, made of long white slivers of wood laid like reeds along a head-high ridgepole. These little huts looked like white haycocks, tent-shaped and hollow.

On this road across the mountains of the Limousin

there was no chance to spend the night from Limoges to Perigueux. The last half was solitude. We were watching for mile posts and were elated to find 30 K. to Perigueux and almost simultaneously a sign-post 35 K. to Perigueux. This discrepancy was explained by two roads ahead at a fork. The short one climbed still more into the mountains, the longer one looked much newer and was a marvel of smooth white limestone. We took its perfectly engineered sinuosities up a desolate valley, all furze and rocks, a land without human habitation. We said to each other, not a place to live in and no one to live in it if there were!—when an old woman rose up from behind a rock to look at us and we wondered if she would crawl in again to sleep.

Under a bank of moss and ferns we turned abruptly up-hill into Perigueux, circling the *place* in a darting traffic and trying to judge by the window curtains which was the better hotel.

It was while eating an excellent dinner we saw a simple courtesy. Six men sat at a round table. An old gentleman, very greatly bent, what the French call *agé,* was seated with them. Their roast chicken came on one platter. It was set before him and all waved that he must take first choice. It was a little thing but a gracious one.

We went to sleep planning to be out early to see the town on which Baedeker bestows the word "lively." In the darkness of the night an ear-split-

ting siren was blown in one long blast. It was the Perigordian method so to announce a fire and assure an attendance at the spectacle! A fire, a fête or a funeral, a Frenchman goes!

Perigueux had burst into markets overnight. Not one, not two, but at every turn. Near the hotel was a market for old things. On the *place* we had circumnavigated the night before were hundreds of tarpaulined stalls, with baskets and sabots, harness and home-dyed wools, a dry market brilliant in its colors. By the cathedral, another was full of women, with pale green endives and bright apples, fine pears and lettuce. Live chickens were on a side line, also in baskets. It was a compact acre busy at buying. We wanted to buy too, and sought some pears but though we asked the price for four and they were big, the woman wanted to sell us all she had or none, and so we drifted on to see the excitement down by our car. It was a live chicken on the cathedral gate escaped after purchase. The whole market-place was entertained by the sight. We were too, for fun is infectious!

All this time we were under eleventh-century St. Front, now the cathedral, with a majestic tower rising two hundred and fifteen feet over our heads. We found entrance on another open square into the curious, equal-lengthened cross which formed its interior, marble domed with lofty cupolas. This is a Byzantine church, curiously resembling the shape

of San Marco in Venice. It seemed certain some early church architect had followed the Venetian model. But not so, say the students of records. St. Front antedates the Venetian; it was finished before San Marco. Immensely high and solemn and white, it was wholly without mosaics or color. It had great cloisters undergoing such renovation that they might as well be new!

Looking at some old houses and narrow streets we came upon a shop-window with a picture of the church which, on sudden impulse, it seemed best to buy. We went in. "We should like to buy the photograph in the window," we said. It was not for sale! Next summer he would have them for sale. This was winter. In winter he made prints; in summer he sold them! All this with the most courteous manner and in the smallest shop. "But you have this one!" we said.

"It is in the window!" he said.

Just then one of us saw another on his desk. "What about that one?"

"It is not finished!"

"It is just as we want it!" we assured him.

"Madame," he said quite gravely, "my reputation! I am an artist!"

"Ah!" I said, "I saw that the moment I looked in the window!"

He softened a little, seized a brush and a magnifying glass, made two quite imaginary dabs at it and

we parted with many bows so that Perigueux purchasing was imprinted in our memory.

Turning the car by good fortune down an old street we came upon another rectangular space absolutely solid with human beings. The market women faced each other, shoulder to shoulder, baskets at their feet in hundred-foot lines, facing another line standing the same way, and backing another aisle and another, down the whole market-place. The buyers crowded between the baskets. It was quite evidently a great occasion. On foot we joined the jostlers and went in between the baskets.

"What do you suppose it is?" We inspected the great, queer-looking, shiny, buff-yellow masses of—it was hard to say what! There were hundreds of white linen baskets full. It was the great goose-liver market of Perigueux!

"Madame, how many kilograms does that *foie gras* weigh?" we asked.

"No! No! I will not sell one! The whole basket or none!" she laughingly answered. So we hefted one in its cloth and decided it was fully five pounds. There were thousands of them in the market and also the goose breasts stripped from the bones, for smoked meat. We left this market, deciding Perigueux is lively and self-willed as well.

It proved a very easy city to get out of across the river Isle, whose waters go out to the sea, through the broad Gironde, another water-shed from the

Loire. Our road faced a fork with workmen gossiping in a group, their eyes dancing at each other as they talked. They directed us with great courtesy, for manners were in use by low and high.

An unusual village, St. Laurent-du-Manoir, enchanted us. It had piquant roof-lines. Even on the woodsheds, four-sided, pyramidal, blue slate roofs were coquettish. A little manor house in a garden by the village side had a long roof and ended in two white round towers with cone tops of blue. The village of La Douze had an open Italian-looking building on its square, standing on many pillars like a set of legs under a tortoise shell. Sixty small pinafored boys poured out of school.

We had soup and salt fish set neatly before us. It was a plain room with a stone floor on which water had been sprinkled in regular wiggles—though a wet floor would have been more timely on a hotter day. They took our plates away and we heard murmurs of sadness. Then they brought us breasts of chicken, two inches thick! When the little girl took the plates back we heard *"Bon!"* in sheer delight. The young school-teacher with a gold medal on her breast came in to try her English as she returned to school.

We were traveling southeast toward the medieval mountain-place of pilgrimage and beauty, Rocamadour, out of the highlands of Perigord and toward the western side of the great fastnesses of Auvergne,

what is called the Massif Central, with the mountains called Cantal in sight ahead of us. The road was not a highway and had to be chosen from village to village. There were many changes of quality, but by watching for valley roads on the map, as far as possible, and asking in the few towns we had no difficulty.

The waterside village of Le Bugue was drawn out in extravagant length. Campagne was another village under two great verdure-clad mountain slopes with fir trees, dark and high, the kind whose "slender tops were close against the sky." In the sun at the village end, under the deep green mountain, walled in by a high park wall beside the rushing river, was the great château of Campagne, a marquisate in its park of ancient trees, *centenaires* as they called them. Women were washing at the fountain in the mellow, yellow light, in the quiet setting of two centuries ago.

It was again a wild country of oak forests and great heights and then an abrupt descent into Sarlat, which in advance we thought might be important because a network of roads showed on the map. We had learned from experience this means a place busy at some time—past or present. Sarlat had a past but also a most active present. Here in the wilds, in a deep vale, was the impossible, a pretty tannery town. It had coöperative industries and agencies of American implements, as well as con-

trasting twelfth-century watch-towers for the dead. Montaigne's crony and intimate, Le Boetie, lived here, he who was one of the first to write free of court and king.

Taking counsel of an agent of implements in this remote spot, as to roads, we went up on the mountains into high places of great beauty on our route ahead to Souillac. The mountains were bare, their tops shaped like great skulls in their dome-like roundness. Only in their crevices were there tufts of foliage clinging by tentacles. In one valley we went under a railroad, between huge square stone pillars, spread at their base. The road looked like a ribbon threading through to the distances ahead.

Approaching Souillac twenty kilometres were along the Dordogne under a high cliff with the rushing river below us as we curved around headlands. Sometimes we found smoke coming out crevices in the rock to be explained later by finding a tunnel-end within a mile or two.

Very occasional ox-teams were all we saw on the roads, dark ones hereabouts, hauling heavy logs suspended below great wheels. There were no more pretty white coifs on the women. The only head-covering was a black cloth wound tightly about the back of the head, a dull head-covering, with no variety.

At one place we ascended a great palisade of dark rock, standing like a fortress wall for miles with a

wide band of white rocks along its top, above a flat green valley. Across the green level and following us, rose exactly the same formation of rock, banded with white near its top. It was a country of great open distances, impressive in its loneliness, seen the better for not being broken by houses and men.

We crossed the Dordogne, a great flood of a river, on a vibrating suspension bridge to Meyronne emerging under a black ruin of the Middle Ages under a cliff, and then up in the mountains again.

There were bushes hanging full of blue berries like our huckleberries. Wild boxwood clung on the mountainside, beautiful when in low-growing masses and where it hung over white rocks shaded by time into black. We traveled the solitary country for hours and did not see a house. A shepherd with a flageolet and his sheep made us sure he slept out with them by night.

The lonely heights looked down on valleys very green and flat, used as rich pasturage across the entire bottomland. The thought kept coming: "Where's the stream? I never saw a valley without water except in Kentucky!" Most curiously the explanation was the same. This is a land of limestone caverns, of stalactites, of subterranean streams, of *gouffres* and sources, a land of pool-like and inaccessible valleys where walnut trees grow, where the cliff edges are so abrupt men are lowered with ropes to gather the nuts on the trees! A land where

the rivers disappear and burst out as greater streams after long underground courses.

An eerie land it was with the sun setting behind the shoulders of the height of 450 metres. Rocamadour seemed to move farther and farther away among the hills. The small railroad station, astonishing to find up in this remoteness, was still five kilometres from our destination. It was dusk when we reached the top of a precipitous valley at whose base, in a canyon, Rocamadour lay.

The road, about fourteen feet wide, lay unseen before us. We dipped over the edge saying to each other, "A good road always goes somewhere!" We went into the rock in a two-hundred-foot tunnel and emerged to see advancing motor lights. We drew aside and waited for the car to pass, happy to know someone was coming up. We could surely go down! The narrow road was graded down the side of a cliff with a low wall between us and—just nothing at all! We descended into the valley and darkness from three hundred and fifteen metres altitude in two kilometres of road, almost to sea level. The grade of the road grew steeper as we entered the old hill-scrambling village and our lights showed a wall with a small arch across the road. "No getting through that!" we decided. Strange it is that in motoring never do narrow arches or lost bridges come in the forenoon. Dusk is their time! We measured the arch and found we could get through.

In half a mile there was a sign: "Garage ahead!" and we were gathered into the comfort and plenty of the inn of Rocamadour.

There were no other guests at the hotel, simple, pleasant and small, backed up against the rocks and gardened onto the hillside like a wallflower. They built a cheerful wood fire banked with nutshells in the dining-room and set a screen around us, in front of the fireplace. We found out why our wood-fire forefathers had settles with backs and sheltering fireside chairs! The garnered heat was glorious and we dined on epicurean delights. Here, remote, where were lone shepherds and forests and solitude, in a stern and rock-bound valley, is a land famous for fine food. Its truffles are the best; their *foie gras* is shipped afar; preparing their walnut meats is the industry of the village. They were cracking them as we came by and do so all winter in cheerful, homely groups.

The fire died down, we were drowsy with a day's fresh mountain air and by the first candles we have used in an inn, we went up the stairs to mountain-air rooms. There was only one blanket on the bed but it was a *montagnac,* fuzzy, soft, deep, white, made of wool from the sheep of the countryside, famous for quality. It can't be the countryside alone that gives quality to all these things. It must be the French faculty of getting perfected results from simple things.

THE CLIFF-SET SHRINES OF ROCAMADOUR

Once a Cardinal's Palace, Near Avignon

Rocamadour

We woke in the morning feeling as only one can after a sleep in the mountains, to look out upon the green valley, the unbelievable hill we had descended and the perpendicular rock up which we were to clamber to see the churches and shrines overhead.

Saint Amadour, in the great backward of time, he is confused with being "Zaccheus he Did climb the Tree his Lord to see," came through France looking for a lonely spot, and saw this rock in its solitude. Its climbing opportunities appealed to him. He scrambled up and enlarged a hole into a grotto and desired to say his prayers alone. Pilgrims began to come as to a holy spot. We climbed the face of the rock in long zigzags and flights of steps to twelfth-century churches and older chapels and crypts clinging to the rocks like swallows' nests. This "ecclesiological beehive" is a place where every year pilgrims come. They have been coming 1,800 years. So long, so far, so hard was the way,—the footsore pilgrim toiled himself into penitence. Roland, dying on Roncesvalles plain, left his sword to the Virgin at Rocamadour where he had been.

The beauty, the strangeness, the narrow terraces, the still mountain air, the valley roofs far, far below are more impressive than the modern shrines. Zaccheus, in his tomb behind movable bars, is bedded in artificial moss. Roland's sword is driven high in a wall and Fenelon's mother gave her son to the church because she believed in her pious touch of

this (restored!) sword. Faith is not an affair of simple peasants.

We tried to shake off the door-openers and wander about in the undisturbed Middle Ages, in crypts and grottoes, chapels and refectories. Best of all was out on the paths cut in the rock and up to the castle standing tiptoe on the rocky mountain height. Its walls were topped by a battlemented walk of a quarter of a mile, one of the delights of a lifetime, so above and away, so high, so free.

We were advised at our inn that the mountain roads were very steep and narrow ahead and that we had better go up the hill and over the same road as far as Souillac. As this was a road of exceptional beauty, we backed out of the garage shed and were at once on the steep ascent. It was not the best way to begin a steep hill but the ascent in the morning was not so bad as the unseen descent. We emerged from the tunnel to stop and look over the steep-walled valley, and the shrined and castled crag—and to read a large sign: *Attention autos! Passage très dangereux!* What a quandary we should have been in had we seen it the night before.

Near the station an open cart loaded with great wheels of black bread the size of auto tires was at the door of a small house and there was much changing before purchase. It is a land of thrift.

There were sheep with little lambs with them and one had three little sets of shaky legs tagging after

her up the thin pasturage on the hillside. A shepherd and his dog were with them and the one inevitable, defending goat. A mother was out with her little brood, watching sheep and knitting as she stood. There are still wolves hereabouts, so it may be necessary to have a shepherd instead of fences.

Again we saw the miles of rocks on both sides of the wide green valley. These limestone hills abound in caverns and rushing unseen waters. There are stories of peasants losing their flocks in underground holes and folk-lore tales of aristocrats in bygone days, who shoved their wives into caverns measureless to man.

At Souillac the car was left under the bronze hero, an admiral in far-away fights in French India, while we went in for luncheon. One man, of his small chops, said: "What is this? Not pork, not mutton, it has no taste." The maid giggled and all the table seemed to enjoy the answer "*Chevreau*" —which is better for gloves than cutlets!

Here at hand was the Dordogne River and Bergerac on it, 100 kilometres distant. The river seemed very tortuous on the map and the road exceeded in this quality and seemed a bit undecided as to which bank it preferred. The gentleman who didn't like his chop, assisted by all the others, assured us 101 kilometres of good road quite straight and much traveled would set us in Bergerac.

The road started with promise, for across the Dor-

dogne near Calviac we saw the fair-set château where Fenelon saw the light of day, another Frenchman under court ban and obliged to publish his books outside of France. It was dangerous in Louis XIV's day to have his maxim: "Kings are made for their subjects, not subjects for their kings."

We had not passed Calviac before we were sure not one of those enthusiasts of Souillac had ever been over the road, to wander through little cliff-side villages, squeeze under castle walls, cross undesired bridges, refuse mountain paths, struggle around barns and back half miles off the wrong causeways—or had ever traveled near so beautiful a river as we were doing! "Fairest river of my kingdom," Henry IV called one of this part of France. We reached a place called Le Buisson. Fifteen kilometres ahead on the north side of the Dordogne at Mauzac began a thoroughfare to Bergerac. But between these two places the river ceased to curve, it contorted. It seemed, therefore, not unreasonable to be turned up onto the hills. We traveled and traveled. The road, through beautiful woods, was good but the afternoon was passing. On the map we saw the bridge to Mauzac just ahead. Soon it was in sight. The bridge seemed very difficult to get on. Our road took us to the waterside and then to our distress we saw it was a railroad bridge! Across the river was the town of Mauzac but we couldn't get to it. We turned around in a bare field and stuck fast in the

soil. A man came running and scolded us roundly for going on his field. "Why did you not turn beside the water?" The bank had looked very crumbly and we hadn't wanted watery graves. But when we appealed to his *obligeance* he put his shoulder to the wheel and helped push us out.

"Where is the bridge?"

"There isn't any!" He then praised the inaccessible road and hotel on the other side. There was no bridge or hotel, there was nothing on our side.

Down-stream past the railroad there was a water-power electric plant. We went there and talked with the watchman, thinking he would know a way to reach civilization. He did. We were to go on and turn thus and so and would soon be able to cross to Lalinde and find an inn, plain but good.

It was now dark and we traveled on a levée with ivy-clad trees, grotesque and crooked. We found the turn, the stone posts, the bridge, Lalinde, the inn, all as he said. The hostess came out; she was desolated, her rooms were full. She would try to get her *clients* to double up. We could hear her trying. She came out to say the road was good and it was only eighteen kilometres to Bergerac. She poured in *essence* with her own hands. We went on in the dark. The road was straight and we entered Bergerac and found the hotel hall piled high with baggage. Distrait servants were running about; an imperturbable "madame," her hair a marvel of peruk-

ery, was directing the confusion. A train with forty arrivals was just in. No rooms were left. She took a second look at us. Her heart softened. We could have the state bedroom! Had she called it the royal suite we should have seized it. Those behind us were turned into the night, while we followed our bags to state splendor.

Outside its association with the long-nosed hero of Rostand's verse Bergerac is famous only for its wines and truffles. It was not imagination to think that many noses in the dining-room wore the livery of good company.

We were wakened at a dark seven by the clanging of wooden shoes on the pavement of this working city. "Cyrano de Bergerac" was on the bill-boards for Saturday night, we saw, as we left town, over an evenly tree-bordered route to Bordeaux. Padirac, Figeac, Nerac, Souillac, Montignac, Mauzac that we didn't reach and Bergerac that we did, even Cognac where Francis I was born—all the "acs" seemed segregated in this district of France. Even Cadillac showed ahead near Bordeaux.

The names had seemed like Shadrac and Meshac as we conned the map in the dusk the night before—and almost like Abed-ne-go.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PINES OF THE LANDES

THE wide valley of the lower Dordogne was one long vineyard. There were frequent small roadside houses of stone with gardens and flowers around them and with grapes trained on their walls. There was always a blue-green stain on the stones where the vines had been sprayed by the mixture known to the fruit-raising world by the name of the city ahead of us. There were prosperous houses too, as if vineyards were owned with pride and great returns. Square towers, with one room on a floor, stood piquantly in the landscape as if they were gay *pieds à terre* where owners came to stay a few days at the time of vintage.

St. Foy-le-Grande wasn't "grande" but it was a long, close-built, creamy-stone town with an old house or two with suspended towers. The streets had good solid names, Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, Rue Victor Hugo, for the tourelles to be-corner.

We crossed a toll bridge only to find we were wrong and at once came back. The toll-woman enjoyed hugely that we were *trompee* on a pay bridge.

The exultant cry of "trump" in cards is all one can think of when this word is so used! The toll was three cents but to recross she had a small coin to refund because we had gone both ways.

Twenty kilometres out of Bordeaux we parted with the Dordogne which had some more convoluting to be done to the north before entering its estuary the Gironde.

This is more than a country of vintage and wines, it is a land of vintage wines. We saw certain betowered châteaux, ornamental rather than feudal, whose knightly names have always conferred great pleasure when seen on wine bottles.

On the long, level stretches of vineyards where the hills seemed to march along with us, but far back, leaving a wide fertile valley, we saw we were in a sort of Appian way. In the vineyards, not related to any house, tombs were set often between two tall cypresses. There would be a tall column, a broken shaft, a chapel, as if the owners had loved their vineyards and in death would not be away from them.

At Gardonne the bell was tolling, the priest was in white and purple, six men were carrying a spread pall of black velvet as wide as the road, literally pall-bearers. The word suddenly had a meaning. All work in town stopped, even the man who was filling our *essence* put down his cans and stood in respect.

It was all essentially a valley ahead but the road managed to get in one three kilometre long hill be-

fore we entered Bordeaux. Not until we smelt the sea air and saw the ships, had it ever had meaning: *bord-eaux,* edge of the waters. It was on a long stone bridge arched over the wide tidal Garonne that we entered, with a busy harbor in sight and by old city gates. There were great eighteenth-century thoroughfares and broad quays with monumental houses heaped along them like bastions. We were soon in an open *place* with an enormous theatre and signs of "Take the right," and found ourselves at a most modern and perfect hotel *en face* the theatre.

We were in time for luncheon, so resolute were we not to be late again, and we found great rest and zest in the city. Bordeaux has a quarter of a million of inhabitants but has the air of a city four times that. It is so far from Paris as to be independent of it. This spirit is very old. Montaigne ever turned back to Bordeaux for his happiness from court and Paris. It is a large city and has no small town ways.

Molière was on at the theatre and we went. It is counted one of the finest theatres in France, built in the middle of the 1700's. Its twelve great columns and spacious setting are the civic centre of Bordeaux. Its grand escalier is as fresh as the day it was built.

First came "The Despised Lover." Then Dubussey's "Prodigal Son" was sung, a ballet danced, then Molière again in *L'Avare*—the miser. Bor-

deaux does not do things by halves on a gala night. There was a great audience, all in evening dress, very well put on. White shirts and bare arms and shoulders were everywhere. Every seat, more, every *strapontin,* those French collapsible aisle seats, were full and all was still going after twelve!

Molière's turns of phrase were followed with delight by those around us. They made quiet clicks of pleasure when a verbal point was made. Just so, I suppose did Louis XIV and his courtiers listen the first time to the play—all applauding we know well, when the king found himself amused. The miser's greatcoat of velvet, the graceful ruffs and cuffs of the women were such as Van Dyke painted in his time. They seemed to belong to the châteaux and halls we had been entering these weeks past.

The city is situated somewhat as is Philadelphia. It is sixty miles from the open sea on tidal water. It was three centuries under English rule as the capital of Guienne. Many of its people show traits of color and bearing and have height, quite distinct from other French cities; this was marked at the theatre.

In Louis XV's time, Bordeaux had a governor, a certain Marquis de Tourny, whose years here were fortunately spent in making avenues and promenades and seeing that they were lined with symmetrical and very nobly designed buildings. An opportunity was taken at the time of the Revolution to pull down

all the grim fortresses. Their two great men, Montaigne and Montesquieu, are exalted in statues. There, too, is a pillar to the Girondists, local men who stood for sanity in the Convention and died for their opinions. The old town gates are decorative street ends, lofty bell-towers stand alone near their churches and there are Roman fragments in magnolia bowered gardens, so that the city abounds in spaces and vistas rather than in the moldering old.

Down in an artisan quarter—we admired their phrase for what might have been called slums—is a tenth-century building, a black-looking church once a Benedictine abbey. It is St. Croix, with one of the finest portals in France and a dusky interior lit by small blue windows.

Bayonne is one hundred and seventy-five kilometres south through the Landes, a country variously described as pine woods, as marsh, as two hundred feet above the sea and being difficult to drain. The map showed a long, blue, straight line for a road.

We had read that this road was built by Napoleon I at tremendous outlay on insecure ground as a route to Spain, across the wild Landes. It started out as a long road, tree-bordered to a vanishing point on the horizon. It was paved with very large, ill-set blocks of granite. We thought it best to find out what blue meant on the map. Blue means *pavé!* The blue went for forty-five kilometres. Napoleon's cannon rattled over the stony street many times. We went

forward over the irregular surface jarred and jounced like artillerymen sitting on a gun caisson. We scanned the map to east and west to see if a parallel road existed. There were no parallel roads.

The Landes was long the poorest part of all France, a great marsh, with furze and sedges where the few peasants walked on stilts to watch their flocks. They always carried a pole by which to balance, like a third leg, and on which they vaulted in long leaps. Taine describes the silhouette of a herdsman on his stilts, inert and standing like a sick heron.

This marsh was cut off from drainage to the sea by dunes, with a few inches of impervious top-soil turned into rock. There were no trees. In the seventeen hundreds pines were planted. They are now self-seeding and the inhabitants are prosperous, for this has become the turpentine supply of France.

We traveled steadily through the tall and black-boled pines in the fragrance of many trees. Their green tops were solid. The soil under them was black where it was undisturbed, white where the sand showed through, with low heather. Sheep were grazing with shepherdesses and there were clearings where the wood had been forested. Each pine tree in the forest had a white, resinous gash and at its foot were metal cans ready for catching turpentine in the spring.

The fall and winter are foresting months. Log-

carters with mule teams, three teams and three men, passed time after time. The mules' heads were in a frame like a large five-runged ladder gaily painted in red and blue. The reins turned the frame, and bells jingled. The houses were long, low and timber-framed, stuccoed between the joists and had very flat-gabled tile roofs. They were clean and neat and were distinctly foresters' homes.

On our left was a ten-inch path, maintained by the state. It was marked as under heavy penalty if wagon or beast were driven on it. The stilts of the Landes are no more, but men, women and children ride bicycles on this path. Sober-faced women of sixty were wheeling along to distant homes with bread, kerchief-bound on their heads.

New woods were springing up. Sometimes the clear blue light twinkled through the tree boles in our eyes as we passed or we saw pines like great umbrellas against the vapory sky. As we went south, mile after mile of roadside cork trees were flayed of their bark half-way up. They had leaves much like willows but with the contour of oak trees.

The great south road from Bordeaux had beauty but the *pavé* was so shattering that we saw the hours slipping away, the blue map line was not ended nor the reality of bumps gone from before us. About the time our despair was deepest, we advanced to another road map, our fourteenth so far, and saw that the blue was intermittent. Our spirits rose and

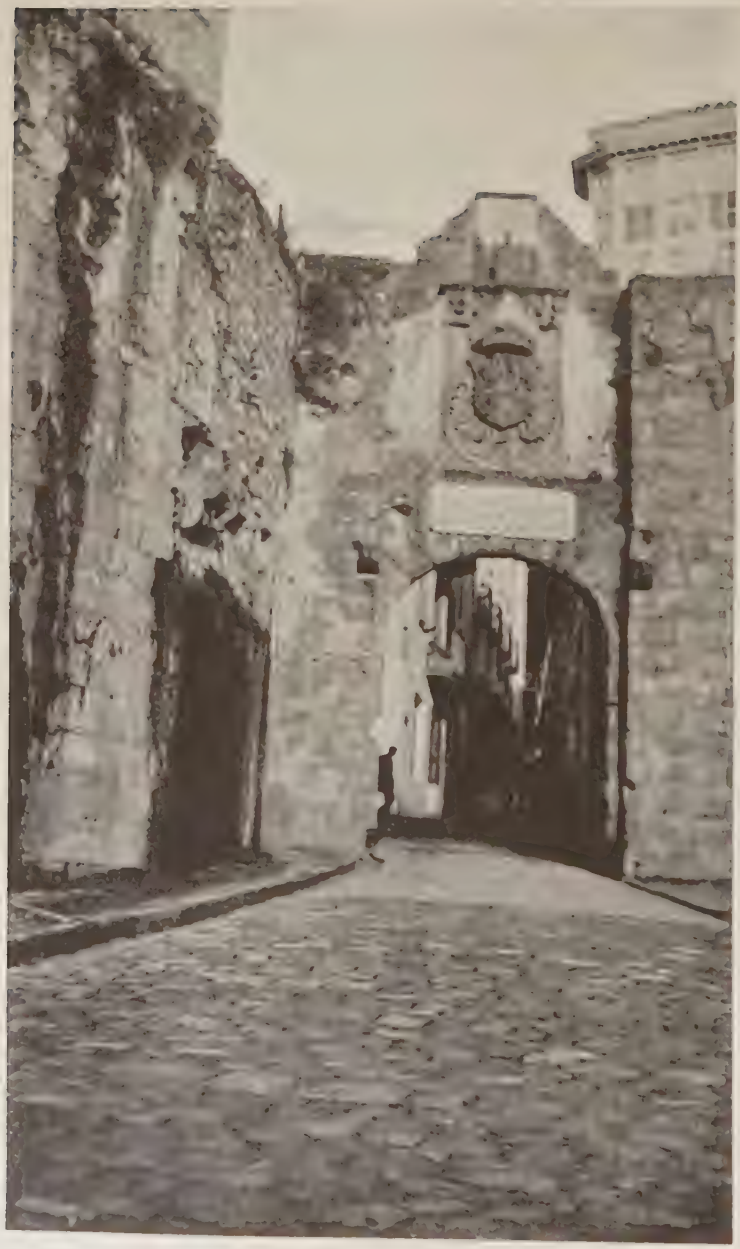
stopping to buy *essence* at a sawmill where a man and his wife were together ripping boards, we had the glad news that we should find many kilometres ahead covered with broken stone making a good road. Never was a smooth mile more appreciated, and so in alternation we came into Castets. Still the long blue-green woods stretched out. Bayonne was so far it was on another road map!

The tiny inn stood at a crossroad. We entered the house. It was more than clean, it was radiant with scrubbing. There was a good log fire in a big fireplace on polished steel andirons, with a white frill under the mantelshelf. The floor was sanded. Several *ouvriers,* as the foresters were called, were seated around the fire. They waved us into the next room. A fire was lit at once and madame sent in a great store of wood, real logs, and urged us to put them on. It was a land of plenty. She assured us the *ouvriers* would all be going home soon. We asked where they lived and we even asked where their wives were! "Oh, they'll all ride back soon; their wives are in the woods, far apart; the men come in every night to talk to each other. They all live *particulière,*" that is in separate homes.

There was some immense piece of news in the next room. Mobilization was all we could think of, to explain such excitement. We appealed to madame when she came in to spread a cloth for us. She told that this very afternoon, a colonel of Bor-

The Only Lake on Our Journey, in the Landes

Cloisters of Bayonne



THE TOWN-GATE, FONTARABIA

deaux—we had seen him, the only motor on the road—driving his own car, saw a bicycle on one side and log carts on the other. He went between, hit both and had killed himself and the man on the wheel. They had thought not to tell as we too were in a car! The talk kept up for an hour, then the outer door opened and shut, opened and shut, and all were gone into the inky dark of the pines and the long path that is kept smooth for riding after night.

We were dining close by the fire when two arrivals by train came in. Each was put at a table by himself. They were true Gascons, talkative and full of pride in their *pays*—and we wanted to hear.

"This is a country where there is always a blaze on the hearth."

"The sheep, had you noticed them? They used to graze on the marshes, now there are pines, but the sheep can still graze underneath! We have a lake near here. Have you seen a lake in France?"

We acknowledged the shortcoming in all our journey so far. We never mentioned there are lots of lakes at home!

"You must see it in the morning. If you go to see it, it will take you off the *pavé*."

These men were eager and everything was best, like boosters for an American town. It was Max O'Rell who said: "There are a good many Gascons among the Americans."

We were suddenly keen to see that lake, the rare *etang.* "Is it fresh?" we asked, thinking we were only ten miles inland from the Gulf of Gascony.

"Yes, fresh; salt must be put in if you want it!" and when we hoped the sun would be out in the morning, they cheerfully said:

"Ah, it rises here in the morning, madame!"

Next day, drinking our coffee at the big fireplace, we saw a kettle simmering on the coals from which the head of the house dipped generously. "For us," he said and he carried off a bowl of turnips and meat. We had often wondered if hard workers toil on a cup of coffee and a roll.

We left the national road to look for the lake and escape the *pavé.* The byroad was narrow but delightful and we saw a forester's home in an oak grove with its carpet of brown leaves and came to a narrow-streeted stone town, through whose little thoroughfares we twisted a way to the sedgy edges of a lake. It wasn't a resplendent lake. An old fisherman came out of his cabin. He had pride in the water. He told us there were eight kinds of fish and his son shot wild ducks on it, the fine kind that they ate in Biarritz, with white on their noses!

"Where will you go, madame, to find anything so beautiful as my lake in any country? Not at Biarritz, no, nor on the border of the sea!" We were all three standing in oozy, wet grass and he was poor. His crotched stakes and his old fish-house and the

sedgy-edged water were all about us. He was proud and he was happy. He lived with beauty and would share it with us.

The pine-covered Landes ended before we reached Bayonne. There were hills and uplands and a descent to the Adour. It was a modern bridge but a lovely river, with warm colors and a southern sun, looking over at Bayonne. There were small bridges jumping across small rivers that here came in. Bayonne was gay, original and half Spanish with wide esplanades, large hotels and many little tables with painted wicker chairs on its sidewalks. Up a quiet street an old château, quite simple and domesticated, raised its round towers. A most satisfactory marble plate told it was *Le Château Vieux,* lived in by: Alonzo, King of Navarre, the Black Prince, Du Guesclin, Dom Pedro the Cruel, King of Castile, Louis XI, Francis I, Louis XIV, and Marie Anne, Queen of Spain.

Reading of the heroes and monarchs, even Marie Anne, was like seeing a pageant pass. Napoleon's palace was a square house in a garden of camellias, where he changed kings on his European chessboard and lifting a monarch from Madrid, moved his brother Joseph from Naples to Spain.

Bayonne has ever been a place for curious meetings. Here the Valois brother and sister, Charles IX and Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, had a happy visit while Catherine de Medici, their mother, was

closeted here with the Duke of Alva, Italian and Spaniard, planning the dark French tragedy of St. Bartholomew.

There was a quiet cloister behind the greeny-black cathedral entered through a room where an old priest was slowly counting a table of small money. There were two silver bowls and two old armoires and in the sunny cloister priests were walking, between services, and lent life to the solitude of the quiet arches.

Bayonne was bilingual. We were not long in it before we heard Spanish and saw Spanish signs and the flag of the Spanish consulate. They have always been terrible fighters here. "Ancient enemies" has been a state of mind.

Biarritz lay only seven miles past Bayonne, on breaking cliffs whose fragments strewed the bay. Away at the right, Cap Martin, with a white lighthouse, was a landmark toward a turbulent sea. The cliffs had descending drives and paths bowered in airy tamarisks. Vast hotels and their gardens and terraces faced the view. Shops with sapphires and pearls, and many motors and much gayety were everywhere. Yet with polo and fox-hunts and fashion, it was half Basque, half Parisian. Great ox-teams plodded in the streets, their heads covered with furry hides, their backs with white canvas, and poor fishers were in their little harbor.

The waves rolled in unending surf. There were

grottoes in the rocks where the water rushed through and fell like cataracts. The beach extended for miles. The blue sky and warm sun were there in December. Eugénie set its vogue. There is a story of Napoleon III being alone in his dull château and so bored that he telegraphed to Paris: "*Envoyez Schnieder*"—naming a sprightly comédienne. Whereupon his chamberlain, knowing only a fusty archeologist of that name, sent this dry-as-dust by special train, in time for supper.

If monarchs and queens of old add interest why should not those of to-day? At Biarritz the tall king of Spain courted his princess of England and his grey motor, driven with speed by his own hands, goes often over the road out and in the Spanish frontier. And if one wants another modern touch, Prosper Merimee here taught a little girl called Eugénie her letters and became a courtier when she became an Empress.

In the bending coast of Biscay, this Gulf of Gascony, as this watery corner of France and Spain is here called, there is something wild and untameable, a grandeur that hotels and villas do not destroy.

San Juan de Luz is an old seafaring town that had its great day when Louis XIV was married here, in the corner of his kingdom to the Infanta of Spain by the terms of Mazarin's treaty of the Pyrenees. This treaty was to end a long Spanish quarrel. Louis and his bride walked between two lines of Swiss

guards and all the court bickered as to who should walk first and whose train should be carried by a duke. Gone is the glory and the pomp but at the small dark church is a walled-up door. San Juan de Luz thus expressed the ultimate in its career.

This is the great road into Spain. The Pyrenees present a barrier with few possibilities of access. The great shadowy, bare mountains rose in series after series to the south. The sea showed in glimpses between bare green slopes to the north. We reached the Spanish frontier at a little river at Irun.

On the bridge in the bright sun stood six men, half of them officers, in a peculiar greeny-drab uniform. They had black patent-leather hats with a vizor and a flap at the back of the time of the Emperor Charles V, surviving in this regiment. We went around the corner into Spain where the passports were most minutely gone over, and ahead for a day's expedition in a hired motor.

Sombre treeless mountains were about us. At one poor village a square-rigged ship rode in a mountain-enclosed harbor so that the white spars showed against the green mountain that stood between it and the sea. A village, one house deep, was around its land-locked basin. There was a scattering of poor living along the highway. These were the Basques, another race from either French or Spanish and not Latin stock. Basque and Gascon are really the same word and mean "clever people" in their tongue. But

now the Basques are those in Spain and Gascons cover a wide area in France.

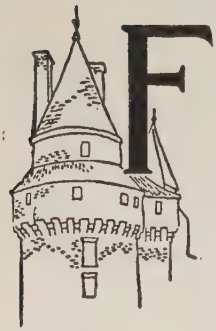
We can see the Basques have a good opinion of themselves in their self-confident air, quite undisturbed by poverty. The houses were like rabbit warrens with children. Little heads, all close-cropped, black, popped out the doors. They swarmed on the steps and in the gutters, sunny with smiles, and waved greetings. Stendhal comments on the children to be seen here as *"une quantite prodigeuse d'enfants."* It was very marked to us, as children had been few and all gently cared for, both rich and poor, as we had seen them on our route in France.

The Basque men, ponderous in type, wore velvet waistcoats and wide, wrapped, girdle-like belts and flat sandals whose soles were rope. A few had trousers that had once been white; two wore scarlet and one had a scarlet beret. The mothers were young and lithe and mostly barefoot. "They have not the intelligence of the oxen!" growls the chauffeur, a man of Bayonne, the ancient scorn of the Basque glinting in his eye.

Passing many primitive ox-carts and heavily laden donkeys we thus came to Fontarabia and drew up under the knobby interlaced plane trees of a sun-saturated terrace where the town comes down to dance in the twilight the vibrant dances of old Spain.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE SHADOW OF THE PYRENEES



FONTARABIA, the old, old town with the musical name, "Oh, for a blast of that fell horn on Fontarabian echoes borne,"—the very air seems to sing with the music of that line.

It was the custom to enter the narrow town gate under a vaunting coat of arms on foot. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are the only ones who seemed to have a right in such a street! Great flat eaves projected over the narrow way, all curiously carved on the lower side, shadowing homes centuries old. Balconies overhung with slender carved balustrades. The shutters were curious. The doors were solid and blank, heavily bossed and studded with brass and bronze, shutting the lower floor in a blank wall. Great, thunderous knockers suggested long-ago grandees within. An ox-cart, with solid disc wheels rudely cut, stood with a stanchioned wine cask at an open door. Two girls with flat fish-baskets on their heads sung of fish fresh from the sea. An old black church, dark and heavy, crouched on the hillside; its gilded altar was so heavy, so smooth in surface it looked like solid, tawny gold. It lit up with its

massive simplicity the sombre, plain setting. A lean sacristan asked us to follow him into a bare, poor room. He opened a window onto a balcony, high above the plain, and a flood of light came on us from the blue sea, the green-grey mountains, the yellow sands. We were Spaniards as we stood there, translated by the splendor.

He drew open armoire shelves. Here were Louis XIV's wedding garments. Drawer after drawer, chasubles and copes, the embroideries, the brocades, the pearls, the magnificence of two hundred years were there. It was "the richest church in the Basque country," said the Basque who showed us—quite as if that were the loftiest praise in the world.

We saw the crested door of Don Diego, who gave his silver for bullets in a great siege and so stirred his fellow citizens that the women and the very children fought. Armorial bearings, like high-tossed heads, looked down at us from the house walls. Caged birds on the house fronts sang to each other as if in the deep woods, in the shade of the narrow street.

High up the narrow Fontarabian street was our first château in Spain. It was a huge cube of stone, square-sided, square-topped; its abrupt bulk was erect, plain, dark, sombre, gargoyled by a few cannon-mouthed waterspouts. This unrelieved mass was the Emperor Charles V's castle. The old town was close about its walls. It had a sign over the door. We drew near to read: "*Château à vendre,*"—the

proverbial palace of dreams, a veritable *Château d'Espagne* was for sale—its price was as modest as a ten-room house at home.

We entered the court of this château of possible price and looked up at its ruinous mossy walls where chickens were penned in the deep embrasures. An old Basque pointed us to a wooden ladder. We ascended to walk over falling and sagging oak floors, of great rooms "whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead."

There was a place to emerge on the terrace, the great stone roof, to be alone with the sea and the sands, the sun and the high, quiet mountains, green about us. Of all the town the great bell tower of the church alone stood up. The château walls, ten feet thick, rising a few feet above the roof cut off completely the street, the town, all signs of life. It was the oriental housetop, the isolated place, up with the sky by day and the stars by night. It vindicated its name—it was a château d'Espagne.

Returning on a valley-searching road, we saw men leaning on their staffs in forward slant like three-legged creatures recalling the old shepherd simile: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The Basque staff looked heavy enough to be a cudgel and too proud to work seemed to fit them.

At Irun, we again passed the Ile des Faisans, in the soft twilight, a small, neutral island in midstream, a meadow strip with a few stone steps into

the water, but in its history a bargaining place of two nations. Here Louis XI—he was everywhere! —and Henry of Castile met. Here Francis I was given his liberty from a Spanish prison and here his two sons were handed over as his hostages to take his prison place in Spain. Brides were exchanged here as a pledge of amity. Henry IV gave his daughter to be Queen of Spain, and received Anne d'Austriche on this island to marry the future Louis XIII. For this a scene of much velvet, brocade and cloth of gold was arranged by Velasquez who toiled to make this meadow-island express the glories of Spain. He worked so hard that he died from it!

From Bayonne we turned to the east to follow under the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean. Early in the day we met a fascinating way of traveling. It was with a donkey but not in Stevenson's way! A better one. On the donkey's back was a frame and on one side below the level of the donkey's back sat a girl. On the other side sat a young man, gay with his red sash. The sobered donkey's face showed between their happy ones!

The road under the Pyrenees was through a storied land; the dark mountains piled against the sky along all the south held between their snowy peaks Roland's pass and Roncevalles Plain. Their long serrated line enclosed the old Kingdom of Navarre.

The road was smooth and bordered by plane trees like endless lines of soldiers in regularity. It ran on

an upland above the Adour and had one long descent to a bridge when the Adour went northward and our route then followed the famous Gave de Pau into the long village of Peyrehorade. A faint, drizzling rain had begun and we came into the village to find each side of the road and each byroad filled with tip-tilted carts, hundreds of them. All the buildings seemed to have stables with horses and donkeys munching away in sight of their doors.

There was a rope-sandal maker very busy at his door among his strings of foot covering. Many of the men had bare shanks above their very flat-soled wooden shoes which looked like boats upon their feet for their sandals were inside.

We asked for a restaurant.

"Yes, yes," we were assured. "There were many. Here, there, all along the street."

We looked in and could see laborers sopping and dipping from their plates. Around a corner hundreds of people stood in the drizzle, the stones slimy with dampness, chaffering away over geese and feathers and cloth and dishes. At the hotel a diminutive "spoil-sauce" in a white cap scampered ahead to show the room where forty people were eating. A favorite dish was the rack of a goose, the bony frame roasted and served to be picked like spare ribs.

It was in leaving this extraordinarily spelled town that we saw under a grove of trees, in a spot used for centuries, what looked like a great herd of buff-

Old Houses of Grandees, Fontarabia

Our Garage by the Cathedral of Carcassonne

colored bison. Fully one thousand creamy-yellow oxen stood, this December day, in this famous ox-market of France. Some were in pairs, some single. They were not offered for meat but for draft use. They cannot surely be sold in such numbers in one day. There may be a sense of pride in offering an ox for sale like showing merchandise in a shop window or wearing diamonds at the opera. There they were on the deep trampled field, men and creamy oxen, all placid and slow moving.

Following the Gave and its beautiful deep-cut valley, still under the mountains now misty on their tops, where Charlemagne's vanguard met defeat, by fields of stripped corn-stalks, spindling to us but a rich crop to Gascon eyes, we came early into Orthez, a matured little town beginning abruptly where its walls used to be. It had not spread and stood tight built on its *pavé* in a sort of blackened grey stone. We felt history about us in the houses, in their age and fineness. A castled cliff, tree-shrubbed, sat above the river-set town. We drew up at the "Inn of the Beautiful Hostess"—*La Belle Hôtesse!* Hippolyte Taine tells us Froissart stayed here in the year 1388 for twelve weeks. Froissart says: "They made him good cheer and fed well his horses and in all things also ordered well"—as they surely did for us and our needs.

Froissart was no sooner at the inn than Gaston Phœbus, Count of Foix, the successor to du Guesclin's

honors and a poet and writer of songs, who lived in Moncade, the castle on the hill, sent for him in haste "to hear the news." It was up in this old château now a ruin, with its lower floor without entrance, its high windows three-lobed and heavily mullioned, and its long line of regularly machicolated top, as it frowns down on us to-day, that Froissart in twenty-two chapters written at our inn of Orthez, chronicled the life of the Count of Foix. He was a friend of the Black Prince, a minor monarch in his own country. What a picture Froissart gives, with the "twelve lighted torches carried by twelve valets" and held while all in the hall supped; of the slender hounds leashed, two and two; of minstrels in ermine and gold; of the banquet where bishops, counts, abbés, knights, a hundred sat at table; of the Christmas day, when in the gallery the fire was so small that Gaston de Foix spoke of it; whereupon Ermanton the Gascon, having seen donkeys paniered with wood in the courtyard, ran down and brought one up and put him, wood down, legs up, on the fire—"to the astonishment of all."—That is the great incentive of the Gascon. It made the garage man, the humble successor of Ermanton, set the jack and lift our car on it when he changed a wheel for us. He liked to do it, "to the astonishment of all."

"Prudent you could not praise him too much," wrote Froissart, and went on to tell how the great lord of Orthez killed his son in this château, though

all his squires had saved him once by falling on their knees to say: "You have no other son." So great was this Count, Gaston de Foix, Froissart believed it was an accident, and went on to tell of his grief and his glories. But the donjon had been pulled down where it happened. No one has lived in Moncade for centuries. Orthez does not boast of Gaston, though it was his capital. It is a town of tragedies. Calvinists were slaughtered and in turn sacked it. The Gave often ran red with blood. There was some counterbalance to learn that Gaston's skull was used as a football by the Abbey sackers.

There was hot blood in this town yet. We found in leaving, a rivalry between garage and hotel. They were at the point of blows over our peaceable departure. "He is *jaloux!*" each told us, as his eyes flashed. "*Jaloux*" is not jealous as we use it, but envious and hateful—they make a terrible sound out of it, and as we left we felt the old motto over Gaston's doors "Touch if you dare" still survived in Orthez.

The snow-capped Pyrenees followed us on our right ahead to Pau, with high up-tilting peaks, broken in outline, lively in their white boldness and dark blue, bare foregrounds. There was a crispness in the sunny air from the nearness of the snow. It was an even graded road with an unnoticed ascent with the river valley, for at Pau we were 600 feet up.

We were ready for a stiff hill into Pau, having

read of a funicular railway and a long carriage approach. Any road was an easy one to its modest height, where stood the château of Henry of Navarre and the long line of great hotels on the superb, sunny esplanade facing the panorama of the mountains. It earned its name—the "balcony of the Pyrenees."

Pau abounded in English visitors and antique shops. The English searched the winter sunshine, and the antique shops were spread for the visitors.

Gaston de Foix having his son's death on his mind and a wife and her sister Blanche also to explain away, tired of Orthez and came to Pau, built in the sunshine and offered protection and no taxes to those who chose to live under his new castle. But it was of "that adroit Gascon, Henry IV," that we thought, as we went toward the castle. Another great Frenchman said: "I am here on purpose to visit the sixteenth century; one makes the journey for the sake of changing not places, but ideas."

The château of Pau had four square, livable towers and an inner court of many styles. It never was a fortress; it was not overpoweringly large but gave France a great king, Henry of Navarre, and was associated with two remarkable women, both Calvinists, both women of power, Margaret of Valois, who wrote the Heptameron and her daughter Jeanne d'Albret. In years long gone by Francis I and an older Henry of Navarre warred together in Italy and both were taken prisoner. Francis I was taken

to Spain and Henry (grandfather of the famous Henry IV) was a prisoner in Italy. He put a faithful page in his bed and went down by a cord on the castle wall and escaped to France. He went to Francis I's sister, Margaret, and together they arranged ransom for Francis. Then Margaret and Henry were married and Margaret of Valois came to Pau to be Queen of Navarre, to have *"les plus beaux jardinages en Europe,"* and write her book and have her happy court in these rooms and slip down to Calvinists' meetings in the cellar. She had white peacocks in her box and ilex allées. White plumes were family emblems. Her daughter Jeanne d'Albret was sterner stuff and her son born here in a room looking out on the Pyrenees, was the one so curiously welcomed into the world by his mother's song and his grandfather's garlic on his lips and the taste of red wine. That boy, who became Henry IV of France, was what they planned he should be, bold, strong and adroit.

Here in the château we saw his cradle, the *berceau* famed in story, a whole tortoise shell, rocking on its curving back. Strangely preserved in the Revolution by an antiquary who hid the real one and let the mob destroy his substitute, it had a touch of the simple and all of the veritable about it. We seemed to see Jeanne d'Albret watching her baby in it, knowing he stood a chance of being king of France and of bringing an end to religious persecution. She

set her mind to make him strong and took him to the Protestant captains, to be their leader when he was fifteen. The "Bearnais"—"that adroit Gascon"—"the helmet of Navarre"—"the white plume"—"Paris is worth a mass!"—the Edict of Nantes—his letter to his dear Bearnais telling of his son's, their king's birth—France preserves at every hand the words and the memory of the man from this château who "carried on a war as briskly as a dance." When Louis XVI sent to restore order, the citizens went out, carrying this tortoise shell, that he should recognize their rights.

It is from his heart the Gascon sings the old refrain: "Beautiful sky of Pau when shall I see you again." This is the centre of Gascony, a land of alert men. D'Artignan and Henry IV are their type. The Gascon ever *"emporte son panache"* is ever in high feather. For centuries they have had the name of being the best marching men in Europe.

The usual route from Pau to Lourdes was in bad condition, and a compatriot advised a byway to Lourdes. It was curiously a traveled one, through villages, around house ends and barns but always in sight of the dark blue Pyrenees into Lourdes. There was a faint sifting of snow in the air as we made a last circuitous approach to gain the centre. The hotel corridors were full of religious trinkets and medals offered in an environment far from churchly.

We slept with the sound of the river murmuring

on in the night and woke to find two inches of soft, dry snow on the ground. There were heavy pines across the river, beautiful in the snow and over our heads a cliff-set castle, another of frowning strongholds of the Foix. Portcullis, great square tower, masses of courtyard-set elms, on a mountain of its own, it now belonged to the town and gave Lourdes a distinguished air, as it frowned across at the piney Pyrenees, with the dark-flowing river between. But it is not mountains and castle that brought thousands monthly to Lourdes but a grotto where a peasant girl in modern times declared the Virgin appeared to her. Where she pointed millions have come. An overhanging rock covered the praying spot and in the snow the faithful were gathered. Ten prosperous men were kneeling there; some were Spaniards. All were very earnest, murmurous in their intensity but very subdued. It was before nine and there was no priest. Just hundreds of candles burning, guttering and falling in the stirring air. A vow, a promise, a desire brought them. It was so simple that it was impressive.

Over the head of the praying kneelers the rocks were black with candle smoke and hundreds of crutches hung like stalactites, votive gifts from the cured. We slipped away in the soft snow up a horseshoe stair to the modern church but it was solitary, the snow undisturbed except by our footprints.

We went on by a white road to Tarbes to find the

snow gone in a few miles. It had slipped down as a flurry from the high mountains. Tarbes remained in mind as a long place, old but not interesting, with an open *place* and a garden and a bridge to cross. This was the part of Gascony, under the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees, that gave France both Foch and Joffre, in her hour of need. On the run of one hundred and fifty-five kilometres to Toulouse we passed few villages and those very far apart. There was a curious sense of rising on the road, which for most of the way was tree-lined and looked to be level. All day the great Pyrenees gloomed and gleamed half blue, half white, all day the great procession changed and ranged at our right. We ascended one great serpentine mountain climb and crossed an uninhabited mountain moor of golden bracken. A few heavy motor camions and three motor cars bound for Pau passed.

Montrejeau had a turreted château with a park, on which we looked down from the hill. So novel was it in the landscape we drew up under its mile of twelve-foot park wall to look in at its iron gate, but iron plates backed the grilles—and all this circummuring blankness when they were commanded in every corner from the height!

We went through the old town, quiet and sleepy with squatty arcades and a bare, blue slate roof resting on huge timbers and pillars, covering an open market site. All the place looked centuries old in-

cluding the inn where *voyageurs* were busy eating a soup so full of vegetables forks might have gotten it to their mouths.

We had been credulous at St. Malo that the salt codfish was all sold in Spain. Here again we had some and as it was Friday we thought this the only available dish. Then the innkeeper brought carrots and meat, and then he offered broiled beefsteak and chicory salad. It was another time when the last should have been first!

On the road from Lourdes it was obligatory to go through to Toulouse. Barring Tarbes, which was near Lourdes, there was no place to spend a night. So we pushed on through St. Gaudens, little and long, of distinctly minor houses, every one looking out at the long line of the Pyrenees. Augustus St. Gaudens, the sculptor, being born with an undistinguished patronymic, took this name for his own. It was the town from which his father came. This procession of the peaks is what a native would carry with him as his heritage.

Soon we came to the Garonne, a flooding river under rocky cliffs, flowing northward. We followed its valley for ninety kilometres into Toulouse into a vanishing point of perspective between the roadside trees. Three ruined towers were outlined against the sky as the kilometre stones went by. The valley became wide and so flat the ditches were gated and pumped to aid in drainage. A little, stony vil-

lage had a fortified church, battlemented high above our heads. The roadside trees cast slim and regular shadows.

At Muret we looked for roses, for this was the home of that army drillmaster of Napoleon III, Marechel Niel, but saw only ruddy-brown, bare vineyards. At dusk on the shortest day of the year, we had made our longest run one hundred and fifty-five kilometres and entered Toulouse through chimneyed suburbs to find shelter in the narrow grilled archway of the best hotel, on the business street, with two cars ahead.

Quite by chance we here found two old friends bound for Spain, and we all tried to figure out which was better off, the first car, the second or ourselves. The first could not move, but might remain. The centre one was at the mercy of the first and third, and we, as third, had to get out first—but we could get out!—and so we were content.

CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTMAS IN CARCASSONNE

TOULOUSE was grey with rain. The cheerful doorman of the hotel told us if we saw the Pyrenees well one day it surely rained in Toulouse the next! We went out at eight, which is an heroic hour in France, intent to buy a tire before seeing Toulouse. One had been ruined by being flat when the road was rough. It was possible to choose from any one of several standard American makes, a few English, as well as French, all with French terms such as *souple corde* on them. The prices were less than in America, perhaps due to the low exchange.

Toulouse has had a turbulent history. Its feuds show in its unique cathedral. It had a great four-sided tower like a fortress placed without significance. Up against it was a brick gable end, plain, but with a surprising rose window and portal. On entering there was a low-arched part of a church and one great column at its end. Its walls were roughly extemporized but they were hung in superb tapestries, though there was no light by which they could be seen. The altar was away off centre and

when we reached the solitary pillar we found at its left a great Gothic choir fit for the finest church, but not related to the tower or rose window. Toulouse had curious ceremonies. Annually in this choir a Jew was brought and publicly slapped. It was a source of delight when a knight once killed his man in his might. The archbishop of Toulouse was hated for years. The Albigenses were killed by the thousands in Toulouse. Slaughter and church building did not go together.

We went out in the rain onto the square where rack and fire did for thousands of the early Protestants and believers in the Devil, known collectively as Albigenses in the twelve and thirteen hundreds.

An old Renaissance mansion in a narrow street was now in the possession of the oldest literary society in the world. It has a Toulousian ceremony continuing to this day. Gifts of gold and silver laurel crowns are bestowed for the best poems written in Languedoc on poets "laureate,"—a greater encouragement to the goldsmiths than to poets, to reward verse in a vanishing tongue.

It was to old St. Sernin, the loved church of Toulouse, that we turned down the broad boulevard in the drizzle, built where the town walls used to be, for St. Sernin was near them. We saw before us an old brick church of immense size, all scalloped by rounded chapels, behind its apse and transepts. A tremendously long church, it stood alone, sur-

rounded by a paved open space. A high tower, with tier upon tier of arches surmounted its centre, arcaded to a slim cone-roof. We drove around it and then we walked around, for the church was locked. We knocked on all the doors like those who asked sanctuary of old, but the custodian had vanished from his haunts with the keys. We sent small boys to look for him, but "the finest church in southern France" defied entrance.

Into this open space by St. Sernin, in the desperate days of a siege, Simon de Montfort was directing stone balls when the women came out to help fight. From this open ground they fired a mangonel—it has a deadly sound—which finished the career of Simon on the spot, saving the city, for de Montfort had a terrible way with cities that fell, a terrible way and much experience.

The old church stands, still strong and fine, though Counts and walls are gone. We had a last rattle at the doors, the carillon of bells in the tower sounded another hour and we went on to Carcassonne, to the southeast. It was an afternoon run and took us past Villefranche with its church, fortified and towered for fourteenth-century quarrels, and Castelnaudary —a town on a hillside, sacked and put to the sword by the Black Prince. Our road traveled near the Canal du Midi, the first great canal of France, connecting the Mediterranean with the Atlantic, a project dear to French hearts.

We approached Carcassonne from the northwest, expecting to see the battlements frowning above our heads. We were swallowed by the narrow streets, the plane-tree avenues of the prosaic *basse ville.*

In the words of the world-popular poem: *"Je nai jamais vu Carcassonne."* We sighed as we peered for it. Time was lost searching for the post-office; it too seemed perverse and only to be found by its back-door. Darkness and rain fell, but before nine in the morning we were clear of the close-built streets and Carcassonne, the *Cité,* as it is called locally, freed itself to our sight. It stood on a modest hill, double-circled about its top with the towers and walls of romance and story-book, showing clear in outline against the distant Pyrenees and against the bare green hills of the middle distance. It guarded as a fortressed hill the valley of the Aude and its centuries-old bridge. This was an important route, the only open path from the Mediterranean, in old times, through, toward Toulouse and Bordeaux, south of the great hill country of the Massif Central, and north of the Spanish frontier of unbroken mountain fastnesses. This controlling position is difficult to visualize when one arrives by railroad but it was very real to us traveling by the same highway as of old.

Carcassonne was always a fortress. No buildings showed their heads over its walls. The old cathedral was once part of the frowning wall. The road

THE TOWERS AND WALLS OF CARCASSONNE

A Monastery Abandoned to Squalor, Near Avignon

wound up the open hill, for kings have taken great pains to destroy whole faubourgs and banish the inhabitants and forbid rebuilding, that this hillside should remain clear. There was no choice of gates! There was and there is one gate, the Porte Narbonnaise, for wheels to enter. There was a certain joyous excitement in running up a fortified hill, in crossing a drawbridge, in entering a narrow port, set aslant through the great walls.

We crossed the second drawbridge, narrow and unchanged, and found ourselves in a tight roadway of yellow houses, round cobbled, too narrow to pass a donkey, too long and crooked and steep to back, too narrow—almost!—to go ahead. The townsfolk drew into doorways and pointed around curves where the path disappeared among blank house walls. Here a corner was cut back in the stone, there an upper story overhung by four feet our crooked way —and thus as we were fortunate in not meeting anyone descending, we emerged under the church wall and at the hotel, in the only open spot in the *Cité* of Carcassonne.

There isn't any other place like Carcassonne. There isn't any other hotel like the one up there on the old wall. It stands in the garden of the ancient archbishop's palace, for the days of bishops are gone. But in the garden, the old palace has been rebuilt keeping a wall or two; there are beamed halls and leaded windows, armorial bearings, and great fire-

places and great wood fires in the library. The garden, the walls, the slate-topped towers, the river below, the Spanish mountains, the green hills, the flat-topped pines, were to be seen out every window. The church bells sounded from their tower. We were under a blue sky and a southern sun—and this was Christmas Eve! The door of old St. Nazaire was the next one to ours. We left the glowing fireside. In the shadowy street dark forms were moving and entering the dark door. The old church, a fortress with heavy tenth-century pillars, was filled with cloaked figures seated on benches. The altar was ablaze with candles, the only light in the church. Its chancel and transepts were a line of graceful, tall, Gothic chapels.

The curé was in a golden cope, encircling him to his heels, so glorious and so heavy, he teetered under its weight, and glowed in the candle-light. Soft, old music rose from behind the altar from a choir invisible. Now eighty-four years old, he had had a glorious voice and felt the dignity of the Christmas midnight mass. When his voice broke he gathered himself together and went on with verve. He seemed curiously alone, there in the shadowy old church, once an archiepiscopal see. In his white hair, his golden robes, his deep vibrant voice, he was preserving the tradition, holding Christmas alone in a cathedral. He had the *bon courage,* he was curiously French.

Christmas in Carcassonne

The little city on the hill that kings made so safe, so girdled with walls, has suffocated in its own safety; it has shrunk to a few scores that, outside the care of visitors, have no visible means of support. The monasteries where the Dominicans walled men up for very minor freedom of thought, its convents, its seignorial houses, its archbishops' palace, are gone. But the towers and walls are there. One great wall four-fifths of a mile around enclosed the second and inner circuit three-fifths of a mile around, beset at regular intervals with twenty-nine towers. Towers and walls on the inner circuit have been so built and rebuilt that walking in the open tilting fields, between the two, where now mild-mannered donkeys graze, we saw without great archeological lore, Roman masonry, that of the Visigoths, perhaps even Saracen, besides the towers and tops of feudal days. They were the very ones the Black Prince stormed when he entered the *Cité* and sacked and burned it. There was the very gate and road by which he left for Bordeaux with one thousand creaking ox-carts of loot.

In the night when the bugles sounded in the citadel and the winds blew, rattling the slates upon the towers, and the moon shone over the hills on the open view toward Spain, it seemed as if ghostly ox-carts were creaking away with the vanished riches of old Carcassonne.

We spent the holidays through New Year's in Car-

cassonne. The wardens on the wall trusted us with the keys to walk the walls alone, to unlock tower after tower,—there are fifty-four in all.

A poet here, Fabre d'Eglantine, wrote *"Il pleut, bergère, il pleut,"* touching in simplicity, known to everyone in France, of the protecting love for such a humble, gentle shepherdess as we have seen on the hills in the rain, but found contrast in Paris as Danton's secretary and ended on the guillotine.

Again through the town gate, we emerged and took the highway toward Limoux and Quillan. It was on this road that the view of Carcassonne was perfect. Its battlements bristled against the sky. The contour of the hill it surmounted was clear. It had the "towers outdoing Babylon" of Nadaud's ballad.

We went on through miles of grape-planted land toward the south. Old men were out in the vineyards clipping the bare vines, here growing very close to the ground. One rose from his labor to look at us, but the bend stayed in his back. It was as if the peasant of Nadaud's lines looked at us: "I never have seen Carcassonne"—the heart-cry of one of these toilers whose whole life was spent from vintage to vintage, without time to walk "five great leagues" to see the city of his dreams.

This road gave us, from the first, the feeling that the Pyrenees were about to enfold us. Minor summits of limestone, seamed and blocked, were with us for miles, cresting the foreground. At long

intervals there were rustic villages; one by the river-side lay under high violet mountains and had sentinel cypresses and steeples. It had soft colored tile house-roofs and a bridge with four flat arches set down hill like a game of leap-frog turned to stone.

The root of a stone bridge standing alone across the river from us was old, tremendous, leading nowhere and on no road. It looked old enough for Hannibal and his twenty elephants to have crossed from Spain. The mind's eye could see the hordes of Carthage on such a mysterious bridge stump.

The mountains, bare and dark, crowded in on us, leaving room only for road and river. Suddenly we were in Alet, a village of pleasant green-shuttered inns with green shrubs in tubs by the roadside. In this mountain gorge, with barely footing enough, rose a great ruin of a tawny, round-arched tenth-century church, that used to fill the valley and raised its towers on high between the mountains. By a village tree, a girthy sycamore, was an obscure entrance to the parish church, housed in a fragment of grandeur. Roses and graves were in the ruin of towers and pillars and arches, swept in destruction by the fury of revenge-needing Huguenots.

In the deep valley the shadows were long, for the mountains were high to the west and so were they to the east. The village women washed their clothes in the river and climbed four hundred feet up the

banks to spread their linen in the western sun. We thought them snow at first sight. There is a local belief that fairies protect washing put out to dry and terrible curses fall on a clothes thief. At another village we saw the communal cowherd leading a half-mile line of cows, down an adhering incline path, from some high, upland pasture.

Quillan proved to be a wood manufacturing town, where oxen were hauling logs from the neighboring forests and factory girls walked arm in arm, in very modern shoes, down a grey stone street smelling of resin. We found an inn with a Spanish air, with stone stairs, balconied windows, and strong-flavored food. A group of hunters feasted upon partridge of their own shooting with much forkless picking of bones.

The mountains came more closely in on us, the river brawled forty feet below. The railroad had disappeared into a smudgy hole in the mountain front. Soon the Pyrenees seemed cleft from summit to foundation. The cleft was on a slant, so the sky could not be seen. It was narrower above than where the river was. The river chafed and foamed at the bottom of the gorge whose sides were altitudes of bare rock. The noise of the water accented the solemn loneliness and the great silence of the mountains.

There was no longer a place in the cleft for the road. It was corniced on to the mountain wall

above the stream. At a convolution in the ever-narrowing gorge the rock had been cut into, so that we were under the unsupported overhang.

Before us rose a sheer wall. We entered a tunnel, guarded by a row of red and white electric lights; a long, sombre tunnel under the backbone of the mountain. A distant and dazzling light was ahead. We emerged into the daylight. There was a terrible valley before us of great rock-bound bareness just wide enough for the roadway to be secured to the cliff side by masonry.

This was the Defile of Pierre Lys, a road built one hundred years ago. So absolutely were we under the bare, stony mountainside without a blade of green that avalanched débris was spattered on the roadway, varying in size from a fist to a bushel. The railroad still lurked within the mountain on the other bank of the river. We saw it within a peep-holed gallery and lost it again for miles.

Slowly the chasm relaxed; there was more room in the floor of the valley. There were shrubs in tufts on the rocks, and sharp needle rocks in sky-lancing heights. In another hour's run a feeling came to us that the mountains were off our shoulders. Far away rose the great summit of Canigou and the ranges of Spain.

A region of deep forests, of tall pines, on high mountain slopes and valleys, was now about us. The roads were narrow and were what we have learned

by experience to call one-sided. That is, one side was rising mountain wall and the other was view—the mountainside fell away with nothing in sight to sustain wheels. The most dangerous stretches on this road had stout stone retaining walls rising above the road level.

It was in this land of high-set, piney forests that we came to a road up a spur of ravine, marked to "Bourg-Madame," a mountain short-cut to Spain by an old way. The name fascinated. Who was Madame? We set ourselves to find out. After Napoleon lost his empire, Louis XVI's daughter and her husband entered France at this frontier and in honor they wished to call it for him, "Bourg Angoulême." But the Duke said: "For Madame." And so: "Bourg-Madame!"

We stopped at the fork to look up the climbing height. Andorra lay far up that road, up in these mountains. Charlemagne gave them their right to govern themselves and they have managed to hold their right! Both Bourg-Madame and Andorra had a lure, both were names to conjure with. But, so too had Perpignan and it was on to the south.

Our road ahead ascended the side of a valley and we met two great horses tandem, each with a two-foot, forward-aiming prong on its collar and with shafts from the second horse bolted directly to the ends of hundred-foot masts. The masts, four in a load, were balanced on a pair of huge wheels, far

back on their length. They were making a long haul from the mountains to the sea. The first group passed on a straight part of the road and were given a generous side. We met the third set of masts on a narrow ascending road, with a mountain wall on the right, and a deep gorge on the left. We drew in against the rock and stopped. First the horses, then the men, picturesque wood-cutters greeting us courteously, then half the length of masts, then the wheels, passed safely, but the curve of the road swept the ends of the masts resistlessly across the road. We saw the mast ends coming toward us. We saw the car about to be crushed like a match-box. The men had passed many moments before; they and we, thought all was safe. *"Arrêtez!"* we shrieked out our windows. *"Arrêtez!"* We saw them boosting the horses back on their haunches and clutching their ends of the masts to save us. I started the engine and backed; the mast ends were over the hood. Another foot and we should have been in kindling wood. Their regrets were gesticulated to us hats off and hands on their hearts! A Frenchman gesticulates every waking hour; he can be expressive in emergency. They slewed the load and freed us.

After a long ascent we were across a divide and in another watershed. It was on this part of the road we stopped to watch something moving. There were *izards* on these mountains. We looked intently for we did not want to think them goats!

Century plants with long grey-green tentacles now grew as hedging. Olives were growing in all the cultivated country, and tons of grape stones, pomace, from wine making, lay purple-brown in great heaps by the roadside. The villages were close-set and stony-bare to the very roadway, squalid little places with narrow streets and the houses very blank-looking from having no windows on the ground floor and all being shuttered tightly above.

The leafless, stubby grape-vines grew on the dusty russet-colored fields, mile after mile. The mountains loomed bare and high at right and left. Small, round watch-towers were set on likely-looking prominences to spy over all the land. A tower watched us and we it for an hour. We felt as if one tower handed us over to the next, though no watchers have stood guard in them for hundreds of years.

In one place above the top of the car, so high was it over our heads, was a square-towered russet-colored monastery, an old Cistercian one, an order of silent monks, empty now and even more silent. Near the road was a chapel, a hole in the rocks, penitential or preparatory, we knew not which.

The romantically inclined sojourner in France is always sure that far-away Roussillon has many an abandoned château that can be bought for the proverbial song. Such was the frowning ruin of Castel Rossello, we thought, on a height above us. It was the scene of one of the earliest and most tragic of

From the Walls of Carcassonne

Entering the Pyrénées

THE FORTRESS CHURCH OF AGDE

STREETS OF NARBONNE

the troubadour tales, of Saurimonde and her poet lover, William of Cabestany. Proud Saurimonde leapt from the castle wall—still frightful to contemplate looking up at the perched place.

Nearing Perpignan, the old capital of the once Spanish province of Roussillon, we emerged on an open plain, saturated with light, into a sun-baked landscape of grape stubs, with men plowing gently between the rows, and women stooping and toiling. Gypsies, the women in gay, floating, flouncing rags, passed us in canvas-covered carts.

There were signs by the roadside: "Attention. Hold your animals!" There were posts on which long cones of bunting flew in the breeze. It was now a state field and aerodrome for many miles.

The dusty limestone road had a parched, southern look. The only trees were lines of tall cypresses planted close together, growing like living walls. Their deep black-green was whitened by the dust. So wind-driven was this countryside that the stone parapets of the bridges were banked to their top edges by the accumulation of white dust, caked into a semi-solid. There were dips and depressions in the road where the limestone had broken by wear and wind and reset itself in swells and troughs. We crossed the Tet and were under the rose-colored gate, round-towered and parapeted, of Perpignan, long centuries a city of the kingdom of Aragon.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAND OF LANGUEDOC

IT was Max O'Rell who said: "I understand the Americans who run away to Europe every year to see a wall covered with moss and ivy and some good old-fashioned peasantry not dressed like the rest of the world."

In Perpignan we saw pattering-footed *espadrilles* or, rarely, high-heeled leather shoes on the men. The women were much more showy and bolder than were the subdued women of provincial France. You would expect to see them with a fan at a bull-fight. They were a good-looking people, bubbling over with smiles and fellow-feeling. There was no gloom in the town and no reticence in any of them. Even the hotel servants clamored aloud to each other.

Under palm trees in the open places by the river-side there was much sitting in the January sun. There was a corner where small kids were sold. Glove material must come from somewhere! The walls of buildings were be-placarded with posters as high as the paste brush would reach. This had not been so in any other French city on our route. But Perpignan was different. It feels a reflection of

ancient grandeur from the king of Majorca whose palace was still on the hill.

The city has been French since the days of Richelieu who maneuvered to gain the whole province for France, but has preserved its Spanish air. The old narrow streets still had houses projecting twelve feet over the footpaths, without visible bracket or pillar for support. There were long series of narrow streets without sidewalks, with every house shuttered above and blank with a closed archway to the street. Moorish looking courtyards were seen through long archways. The bread-shops stacked their wares on the floor. Cordage shops were everywhere.

We drove to the cathedral, plain without but it was floored with pink Pyrenean marble, pillared in deep rose marble and its altar was overlaid with smooth gold. We loitered on the way, under *Les Platanes,* the superlative in long grassless promenades, where four rows of monarchs of trees umbrageously knit their tops far, far overhead.

The palace, a fortress, was now a barracks. Its ramparts were being lowered in height by filling in the deep moat. There were coats of arms here and there, and an immensity of structure aloof from the city. On the walls we sought to see the stone arm with clenched, mailed fist that marked the spot where Charles V found a sentinel asleep, pushed him over into the moat and stood guard himself. One wonders who ordered the stone fist!

It was a marked change next morning to be on the way to Narbonne, after the garage man wished us a safe journey with the manner and smile of a grandee and regretted that we should find the road "ten good, ten bad," all the way.

The blue Mediterranean came full upon our sight. The sky had a clear blue light. The massed Pyrenees stood back from the sea. Canigou loomed like a fabled mountain, dominating all this eastern frontier of Spain and France, in an agglomeration of summit; its 9,000 feet rising in our sight on this road from the blue sea water to the blue sky. It was our farewell ride under the Pyrenees. They were austere with a snow that had fallen on their heights in the night. We left them with regret for we had traveled in their close company from the Bay of Biscay and with Kipling had his feeling that we "met Don Quixote himself riding in from the Spanish side and all the chivalry of ancient France watering their horses at its streams."

The little round tower—it had an Arab name—that watched us and we it the day before, again seemed to have an eye on us. A still, salt-water basin was shore-locked close at our right with a line of white sand separating it from the open sea. The rocky hills on our left came near our road. Their white soilless rocks were curiously rounded in contour, worn away from all cragginess. Tufting shrubs of rosemary fragrantly leaved, silvery grey with

small blue blossoms, covered the hillsides for miles. There were paths among the bushes where the gatherers of perfumes and the goats go up and down. It was a country of famous honey likened to Mount Hybla. We saw bees but no hives and wondered why they should store honey when there were flowers in abundance in midwinter. Every available foot of soil between the rocks and the sea was planted with low grape-vines growing without support. Even the beach sand near the still water was stubbed over with the vines of famous white grapes.

We passed tandem horses drawing immense wine tuns on narrow, long wagons that are at once incline plane and transport. A goatherd wrapped in a cloak waved his staff in greeting to us. He had the goats of a village out for the day grazing along the highway and would return with them at night and each goat would go in the arched door of her own house. There were flocks of sheep grazing through the grape vineyards, before the ground was cultivated, not hurting the leafless grapes, but the shepherd's dog was very active when they went near the low-growing olive trees.

The rocky hills above this shore had the reputation of being rosy in springtime with wild rhododendrons but only rosemary and lavender were within our sight in January. The most vivid thing was a sulphur port and works, where all the wharf-side had a greenish-yellow tinge. Though the day was of

brilliant sun the workers in the fields sheltered from the wind in the ditches to eat their noonday meal. There were several ruined estates of tall, pillar-like stucco houses, room above room, with belvideres at the top for views over the vineyards to the open, blue sea. Flat-topped stone-pines guarded each of them and stone gate-posts marked their drives. Tiles and balustrades were broken. Shutters hung awry. Fountains and gardens were half hidden under century plants and yuccas, run wild. Spiders and lizards were the only living things we could see in the great tiled and frescoed room when we peered into one.

Suddenly Narbonne was in front of us with its fortress-cathedral outlined black against the sky, dominating by its bulk as if it were on a hill. We stopped to look up at this medieval structure, heavy and fortified along its roof, rising above the whole town. It was good we had our impression before entering the town, for, perversely, there was no good view of it in dusty, dilapidated Narbonne.

Béziers was farther on, through grape fields white with flowers like candytuft. Wind-worried shepherds wrapped themselves in hooded cloaks and women worked on the vines, their heads covered with heavy wadded hoods, tying the grape twigs in bundles to cook with, for there is no larger fuel. The smoke of these villages had an aromatic tang reminiscent of incense. Herbs are picked by the

women for essential oils and the refuse is burned for the household fires. Thus the smell of their burning was faintly fine, in contrast to the squalor of their setting. Nearing Béziers was an avenue of Carolina poplars, long and regular, which made us think a Frenchman can make an avenue of anything he plants, for these are irregular growing trees with us.

The foothills of the Cevennes were in sight above and away from the sea, mountains of white rock. A storm cloud lowered behind us, black and heavy, and obscured the western sun, darkening the road about us. Suddenly all the mountains to the east glowed in roseate beauty from the level rays of the afternoon sun hidden to us, and we drove forward toward a future ethereally pink. This lasted until we were under the abrupt height of Béziers, notably silhouetted against the sky.

We entered the old city where Molière made his first fame, and where he wrote and played, circling the height at its base on a dismal and unpromising street of great and alcoholic cellars, feeling a little low in mind as to quarters for the night, for there was only this road going obscurely on. To our delight we emerged into a new part of town, a fresh up-to-date hotel and a great thoroughfare in sight up the hill.

Béziers had an air of prosperity over its hilly streets and gardens. Aloft in the town, many of the

streets were too narrow for the car, with a still narrower Ghetto, where used to be a gate to shut the Jews in their quarters. The church of the twelve hundreds, called Saint Nazaire, looked out from the summit of the town wall over all the country. The church windows were covered on the outside with strong, tightly twirled grilles of iron, centuries old. One could imagine the Saracens or the Protestants beating upon them in vain. Rust had not eaten them away though there they were, without evidence of paint, intricate and beautiful, open to the weather.

Booths with rows of the cat-like carcasses of skinned rabbits, and long strings of song-birds and partridges occupied the streets in front of a Romanesque church, so dark and so medieval in aspect, the very priests and prayers seemed to belong to a thousand years ago. Béziers made a record of 30,000 Albigenses slaughtered in one year at this church door. Béziers ran with blood. True to tradition its open gutters were running crimson from the butchers' shambles.

But Béziers' hillsides had beauty in their garden of the poets and a high allée of shade trees, named in honor of a son of the town, Paul Ricquet, whose foresight and skill put the canal across France in 1680. Béziers believes he paid for it himself.

It was a glorious morning when we started on to Montpellier. It was early January but the sky was blue, the distant hills like white dreams, the far-

away villages like ivory. The road was low and level, with the plane-tree borders of Ricquet's Canal du Midi traveling with us toward the sea. There were gypsy camps by the roadside where the men sat and ate, the women gave them food and the little gypsies sat on the back steps of the caravan, two on a step, and ate what was put in their hands. Under one covered wagon, an ape was tied to the axle.

The camera was set in readiness to stop as the next cart of gypsies came toward us with babies' heads looking out like rabbits from a hole. I got out of the car and waited, eye on the finder, for them to come within range. A terrific hullaballoo set in! The gypsy woman beat the donkey, the children howled and fell back in the cart.

"Stop! Stop!" I cried. "I want to take your picture."

She waved her stick and thrashed the harder—shrieking "No! No!"

We waved money at her.

"No. No!" She beat the donkey into a faster gallop far on her way and still beating. The carters walking with their teams saw it all. "She thinks you have the evil eye in that black box—she's saving her children!" So we went on our way into the old town of Agde asleep on its river bank.

There is a saying among etchers that Venice alone has a perfect foreground for its palaces, without barren sidewalk, or arid curb, just the limpid

water reflecting the beauties above. Venetian-like, Agde rose from its river, its churches and buildings directly mirrored in the stream. Blank-walled, high-battlemented, crenelated for defence, cube-like in outline, its castle-church floated double in the water. Built of purple-brown lava from an extinct volcano near at hand, its gloomy color was accentuated by its windowless walls, its keep-like shape, its river-guarding site. Curiously Agde had an Italian connection. Andrea Doria, the Genoese commander, once killed everybody in the town!

The gypsies, not the Genoese, bother Agde now, for we passed a spot by the road, well outside the town, marked: *Emplacement pour nomades,* and passed many more swarthy, short, sun-burned families driving toward the west.

Several narrow-streeted, yellow villages of stone houses of a height to "cherish the shade" had signs in a strange tongue, Languedoc. We ate in one of these tawny villages at a primitive inn, where madame sizzled an omelet for us herself and came to the car to shake hands and piously wish us *bon voyage.* Beyond this we traveled with the horizonless Mediterranean, where the still water met the blue sky in view of "Cette with its glistening white" out on a narrow peninsula in the sea.

Silo-like cylinders of concrete marked coöperative vineyards through this part of France. The wine so stored is always *ordinaire* but commercial proc-

esses are perhaps preferable to the primitive " treading the winepress " which is not obsolete!

Montpellier had a large hotel on a small street and a garage on a main one, a blue sky, a pleasant sunshine and palms in sheltered spots, but its inspiring individuality consisted in being a city from which one can look away. Extending esplanades built out from the hilltop on which Montpellier poises, project in treed allées, gardens and balustrades, free of the city behind. We looked far over to the Cevennes, white and green, range beyond range. At the end of one called the Peyrou was a classic temple outlined against the sky, and a fountain of water, coming on a long stone aqueduct, arch after arch, from the green hill of its source. Montpellier walks and communes with its blue sky, its distant mountains and its peaceful beauty.

Extraordinary things were to be seen on the streets. Two old pine trees grew on top of a high stone tower. The cathedral was unique in possessing two stalwart stone posts supporting a stone canopy over its front door.

On Tuesdays the " Egg," an open *place,* was rife with men, hundreds of them, all day, standing, talking, eating in cafés, a wine market without wine. On other days it was bare. On Sundays, in late winter the youth of the town burst forth, masked for spontaneous carnival, as Pierrots in ruffs, men and maidens alike but for the betraying shoes. Dancing

filled the streets while the older world was happily entertained by looking on. This passes unnoticed in a country prone to censure unchaperoned ways! On the back of a torpedo-shaped car were two wild boars, jetty black, bristly, white tusked, dripping gore on the car and street and the same day we saw an old woman out for a walk with her pet on a leash. It was a bushy-tailed fox. Fourteen dogs—France is full!—were within sight. Each stiffened with interest but not one attacked.

Pets are very frankly in evidence and very much under foot all over France. Merimee tells how he loved cats. Every restaurant had several sleek ones and two dogs, a stiff-legged valetudinarian and its frisky young successor. So often we have lost count, have we seen Frenchmen gently kiss the cat!

It was the season in the south of France for larks. Their song made the hillsides joyous. The cookshop windows had little individual pastries entombing a baked lark, his feathered head on top, to remove any Sam Weller-like doubts of what the meat might be. One night at our table a lark-on-toast was placed before each of us, feathered head under its wing. All our Audubon-trained conscience rebelled. We shook our heads. Their distress was great. "We do not eat song-birds," we told them. "It will never sing, now——" they reasoned persuasively. We shook our heads again. "Will you have mutton, mesdames?" We agreed to the humble substitute.

THE ANCIENT NARTHEX ST. GUILHEM-LE-DESERT

THE PEYROU AT MONTPELLIER

A Waterwayed Street in Nimes

A Market at Roman Arena in Nimes

"*Moutons* do not sing!" they commiserated sadly as the plates were changed.

Romance lay in the origin of the picture gallery. A native, Fabre, had the devotion of the widow of Charles Edward Stuart, inherited her all, and bequeathed her collections to his city. She had them, not from the penniless Pretender, but from her admiring poet, Alfieri, whose poems, pictures and palace were such wonders in Florence that they buried him between Machiavelli and Michelangelo!

There is a delectable Renaissance garden behind iron and gold gates whose terraced walks were for the study of plants and medicines, founded by Henry IV. It was a need strongly felt by a monarch whose mother was poisoned and whose mother-in-law dabbled in sinister medicaments. But a rural garden built for the archbishop by Le Notre was majestic though in ruin. Nature gave lavishly what was difficult in northern France. All this Mediterranean shore has a landscape like ancient Greece. There was a high-set bench of marble from which the blue sea could be seen, a seat backed by tall cypresses, bounded by great urns, overlooking a water basin, now shallow and shaky-walled but guarded by gods and goddesses in marble. There were box-paths and terraces with curving, bow steps. Stone baskets of flowers with helianthus and heliotrope marked the symbol of the sun-king, Louis XIV.

In Montpellier the sun shone, the university was

open-doored—and what other city could give the Pyrenees, the Cevennes and the Mediterranean in one "stroke of the eye"? No wonder Louis XIV, bewigged but classically unclad, stretches forth his hand over his bronze horse in a gesture said to mean: "It is mine to the sea!"

CHAPTER XVIII

ACROSS PROVENCE

WE left Montpellier with its patrician homes and their fine portals, facing old streets so narrow that sedan chairs would alone explain their way of going forth, by a route below the Peyrou, bound for a fastness the French speak of as "the most curious place in France," hidden forty kilometres to the northwest. A friend of Charlemagne had lived there. It was called St. Guilhem-le-Désert and belonged in the Middle Ages.

We entered a solitary gorge eroded by the River Herault, in the desiccated, soilless mountains. It held a rushing of green waters with a thundering where half the river emerged from the arid rocks. In the first lateral cleft, Charlemagne's friend founded a monastery in years when three figures made the date. A castle like an eagle's nest defended it. Another closed the crevice to the valley. Little bird cages of houses hung on the mountainside over the footpath road in an intermingling of ferny waterfalls and stone arches bridging the brook. These are the oldest inhabited houses in

France with walls laid in blocks as the Romans laid theirs. The ninth-century church shows great wealth was here but now all is abject poverty.

On the door of a house, a thousand years the same, were nailed a pair of taloned feet. We thought them eagle's. They were falcon's, terrible, clutchy feet, the kind that used to sit with jesses on the falconer's wrist and be let loose for prey.

On the approach to Nimes cypress trees were exclamatory in pointed outline. Antiquities are used intimately in Nimes. The great egg-shaped Roman arena, arch upon arch, is in the very middle of city life. The restaurant looked out upon it; there is a famous one in Nimes up a stair, whose founder was a chef for a cardinal in *le bon vieux temps!* Agricultural wares are sold all around it; bull-fights are given within—but the old Roman amphitheatre stands in the dignity and austerity of age. So closely do its great unmortared stones fit, that its masonry looks like a unit sawn asunder. It is more living and real than the Nimes of to-day, whose cafés were thronged far out on the sidewalks with little tables cozied up to charcoal stoves burning in the open air. Men and women sat watching the carnival passing. The scene was that of the French cynic contemplating provincial life: "The men sit eternally in the cafés. The women long for a hat."

Nimes seemed curiously small with a car. The Maison Carré was reached in a moment. The little

Corinthian columned masterpiece does not seem to have influenced Nimes in its buildings but its perfection has influenced the world.

A modern quarter of good living along a river balustraded and walled into decorative submission brought us to the Fountain of Nimes where nature and man had combined for two thousand years to keep a place of beauty. Under a wooded hill of groves and balustraded walks, rose a great natural fountain of water. Around it was a marble-made garden of long paths and long basins, of welling pools and descending steps, of satyrs and nymphs, of greenery and eighteenth-century parterres.

Difficult as it is to attain the superlative, Nimes, in many ways commonplace, has the finest Roman temple existent; it once drank water from the Pont du Gard; it has its Fountain. In Nimes and other Roman cities of Provence enthusiastic Jefferson went about with note-book and tape-line, finding inspiration here that bore fruit in the pillars and neoclassic temples of Virginia and Washington.

We went south toward Aigues-Mortes finding a square-towered château where Montcalm was born in a sun-burned land in contrast to the Quebec of his last day. There were grapes to right and grapes to left. The thirst of a nation is appalling that proposes to drink the wine from all the grapes we have seen.

In the marsh-set plain, the road became a cause-

way between lagoons and a stubborn tower, a landmark for miles, straddled the road. We looked ahead at its eye-of-a-needle gate, but as a modern concession to motors a pathway had been made to right and left. The rectangular ramparts of Aigues-Mortes raised their thirty feet above the marshy plain, in one-third of a mile of front. Fifteen towers and ten gates looked out. Founded by Saint Louis as a port for two crusades, these stones were laid in their even rows in the 1200's.

This walled town once had a triumvirate of unusual visitors when Andrea Doria entertained his two friends Charles V and Francis I. Through the fortified gate we seemed to roll up the main street in their shadowy wake to the simple inn, named for the royal founder. Of all the inns of our journey none attained a more perfect hospitality than here.

At dawn there was the tootling of an air and the rhythmic sound of dancing feet. It was the young men about to leave for military service, dancing the *farandole* in the streets. All day, up and down, the gay, lithe youths danced, hand in hand, the old dance of Provence. The children watched, the elders cheered. The horn tootled, the drum beat, and each shop, each household, brought out a gift of food, for a farewell feast to those in the *farandole* to-day, the *caserne* to-morrow.

A young veteran, a *mutile,* turned the huge key and let us out on the town walls and watched for

The Town-walls of Aigues-Mortes

The Farandole Danced in the Streets of Aigues-Mortes

Roman Theatre in Arles

The Portals of St. Gilles

us, to let us down. The ten gates were used by housewives to lay their clothes in the sun, by old men in daylong basking. The children ran out to play. The very lizards were on the outer side, in the sun.

Inside these ancient walls a grey street was illumined by a tall man in scarlet with a silver-laced cocked hat. Three boys in scarlet and white rested silver candlesticks upon the paving stones. One carried a high silver cross. Two priests chanted down the narrow street, in capes of black and silver touching the stones. There was scarlet and silver in the grey-green street, one dark cypress tree and the old towered gate at the end. And at the port at the open sea a fleet of lateen sails irresistibly suggested piratical purposes. We drove back to find Aigues-Mortes reflected in the marsh water in all the glories of sunset.

The mistral was blowing as we left Aigues-Mortes and on leaving the walls we felt the wind as a steady blow from the land toward the sea but with a brilliant sky overhead.

The delta of the Rhone lay ahead of us, an arid land since the river is controlled in its bed, but in Roman days famed for fertility. This is the Camargue, a land of hummocks and reeds and grass, almost uninhabited, where wild cattle graze and are rounded up for branding, a land of primitive living, of reed huts and unkempt men in goatskins.

Across the marshes to the southeast tradition says the three Marys landed and Lazarus and Sarah, a black servant, were in the saintly party.

As we neared the sea, a low-set village of small houses surrounded a lofty, practically windowless church, with a parapet and fighting tops to its walls. It was Sts. Maries. A cattle-yard with strong post-and-rail fence was against this church wall and the smudges of many campfires. This tenth-century church brings all the gypsies of France once a year. After they have camped, the gypsies pack the crypt, the floor, the galleries and the roof and shout: "*Vivent les Saintes Maries!*" But the great hour comes when they crowd the roof and pack around to watch the bull-fight in the ring whose one side is the high church wall. Ever it is tolerated for such parishioners are kittle cattle.

We knocked at house doors; no one answered. The church was open. Its dark interior had lofts and perches and a one-sided gallery to hold a great throng. The saints hung in a crowded boat over the altar, and all was poor, crude, interesting, and very much fortified.

The mistral blew stronger as we turned north against it to St. Gilles. We had not seen a human face in Sts. Maries. All were in hiding from the wind. Ever since leaving Perpignan we had been told of the curse of the country, the wind. It does not blow every day. It has no relation to storm and

carries no clouds before it. The mistral, the "master" wind, is a great southward rush of air to the Sahara, to replace the currents rising over the scorching sands.

The resistance of the gale was so steady that the motor was running full power, as if on the steepest grade. At times we seemed to make almost no progress. With black and scudding clouds we should have turned back, but with sunshine, we kept on, finding it curiously hard to think of danger on a brilliant day. Once where a long line of stone buildings, half farm, half manor, edged the left of the road, the release of pressure was so great that the car jumped ahead as if in a race and the steering went altogether wild.

It seemed a day of adventurous anxieties, for we faced a pontoon bridge loosely constructed of seven old boats bound together with logs. It was a scramble down and a scramble up. The only man we saw on the open Camargue was a shepherd covered in a hooded cape of mustard-yellow, on the road with three hundred weary sheep. He came toward us as if leading a wind-torn cloud of dust. A few goats watched us with their slant-irised eyes, and last came the worried sheep dog with his bristling steel collar. We watched the marshes for flamingoes but none stretched their wings in the gale though we saw long-legged birds wading. It was a great relief to reach the suspension bridge with the name of the

river on it, " Petit Rhone," and to enter St. Gilles. The three famous round-arched doorways are familiar to Americans by their adaptation as the portal of Saint Bartholomew's in New York. St. Gilles had but the superb portals to live in one's memory as the goal of the long drive across the delta of the Rhone but they were adequate. We went to Arles for the night, drawing up in the square under a bronze and big-hatted statue of Mistral, the Provençal writer and under the rival hotels of Arles. We faced a choice, with the eyes of both hotel staffs fixed upon us!

At dinner they were telling great tales of what the mistral, the wind, not the writer, can do, railroad trains blown off and bridges blown away. But there was a certain old Arlesienne, the keeper of an antique shop, that we went to see in the evening and the fun of finding things by the light of a candle enclosed in a hot tin lantern made us forget the anxieties of the day.

Next morning Arles was calm and still as we wandered in an avenue of stone coffins of early Provençals and under the pink marble columns of the Roman theatre and cloistered ourselves for an hour in the beauty of the monks' walk under the famous arcades of Saint Trophime. We saw many women with their well-set velvet headdress. To be an Arlesienne has been for centuries synonymous with being beautiful. It makes for pride of bearing. In our short stay it

was not difficult to see a dozen superbly poised classic heads of a beauty not dependent on youth.

And there was the cheerful museum that Mistral spent his Nobel prize-money to assemble, the Musée Arlaten, a delight of old furniture and costumes of Provence, housed in an ancient mansion—even the wax figures show a naive faith that all that is Provençal is beautiful. Constantine gave gifts here too and in the open *place* is an obelisk of granite from Egypt, the only such in France.

Arles offered radiating roads to many places but we were resolute in going to Aix-en-Provence on the way to the Riviera and leaving all points north for our return. *En route,* we were scarcely clear of Arles when, on what was once an islet in the marsh and now an islet on the fields, rose the ruin of Montmajor. A high palace of the eighteenth century stood so ruined that no one may approach it for danger. All the twelfth-century part, the beautiful church and the cloisters around an old well, a curious comment on building, were safe and could be roamed about in. The fortress tower was a secure stable for farmers' horses and a miniature chapel shaped like a letter X seemed best of all.

Ahead lay the white-rocked Alpines, foothills of the Alps, on top of which perched the city of Les Baux toward which we aimed.

We were traveling through olive orchards, with short, gnarled trunks on the trees with leaves the

grey color of wind-blown smoke. There was at a crossroads to Tarascon the old mill to which Daudet retired and wrote the stories: "From my Mill." Everywhere in Provence was white lime dust, and one remembered Daudet's proud old miller who kept his meal sacks full of white dust to look busy.

The road ascended rapidly in a serpentine through a vale of white rocks, rounded by the centuries into grotesque masses. The abrupt climb of nine hundred feet on a one-sided road set us in the narrow street in the abandoned hill town of Les Baux. All about us was the white ghost of an old perched town. Lovely windows of the days of the Renaissance were overhead. Mansions, partly hewn out of solid rock, stood roofless with weeds on their hearthstones, though their chimneypieces were carved with coats of arms. Only one or two houses were inhabited, for the life had gone from Les Baux. Its castle sat aloft and from its courtyard we looked far off to the sea over all the valley of the Rhone, bounded by white mountains gleaming in the sun. So abrupt were the cliffs of Les Baux that in more than one place in castle yard and town a stone could be dropped to the plain below.

The lords of this town were powerful for hundreds of years and masters of a score of castles, and intermarried with royal houses. Here were held the famous Courts of Love where lords and ladies and troubadours told chivalrous stories and discussed

what should be the fate of those in their tales. And now, Les Baux is a hollow shell, white, and lonely, beautiful on its white Alpine, but no one has reason to live in its great houses or on its isolated hilltop.

Motoring up to Les Baux and leaving it by its only other approach, a cut over its backbone of rock, gave us a sense of having joined a cavalcade of its troubadours. We looked back from the long sunny olive slopes and the stone-posted road on the side toward St. Remy, at castle wall and rock wall so intermingled that rock and castle were one, outlined high against the sky.

St. Remy seemed very near Les Baux on the map, but the chain of the Little Alps is between. The white rocks were everywhere in sight. Here and there were great rusty-red scars on the white outcroppings of Bauxite, named from these very spots near deserted Les Baux, before it was dreamt that half the world would be cooking in utensils made of its product, aluminum.

The ascent of the pass to St. Remy was superb. We were among whole forests of trees, the first since Quillan in the Pyrenees. The road emerged to a view far over the valley of the Durance and descended rapidly to the old Roman arch of St. Remy in a green and lonely olive grove, standing where stood a Roman city now vanished from the earth. It was an arch of triumph built in conquered Gaul when Vercengetorex lost his battle. We looked

upon him a captive, carved on the orange-colored stones, a huge man with his hands bound behind him. The hero of the Gauls was at Cæsar's chariot wheel in his triumph in Rome but there seemed more horror in standing through the centuries on a triumphal arch in the country of the conquered.

It was only a kilometre or so into the town of St. Remy, a famous source of flower-seeds, and then there was a marble-white road made by limestone crushed to a paste and hardened. It was bordered in its level length by lopped trees, far on the way to Aix-en-Provence. We entered a neighborhood of mountains with snow on their tops and came into romantic Aix, a brown old city, shabby and interesting and put up at a hotel whose baths of natural hot water were favorites of Sextus of Rome.

Aix-en-Provence lived up to its name. Aix or Aigues, les Bains, la Chapelle, or Aigues-Mortes implies "waters" by the name, and the city we were in had everywhere purling fountains at even its humble street corners, an idea surviving from Roman days.

The French opinion of Aix-en-Provence is of conservative families, secluded behind their russet-colored façades, intermarrying, smothering themselves and their city in aristocratic pride and dying. We drove in its narrow streets under the high clock-tower of the town hall, to see more beautiful old doorways (all closed!), more balconies of wrought

iron, than in any city of our journey. It was King René's capital, but other places, Angers and Tarascon had his castles. Aix had his cathedral and his portrait long supposed to have been painted by himself, for he was poet and painter, a lover of art and king besides.

He knelt in the left picture of a tryptych on the wall of the cathedral nave—even his picture was conservatively locked. He was a fat-faced, quiet man in a wine-colored gown, looking across at his pale-faced wife in ermine-edged bodice. Between them was heaven, a vision in the top of a clipped tree, and it was their own castle of Tarascon, the heights of Beaucaire, their own blue sky of Provence, their own River Rhone!

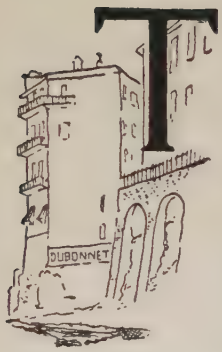
A sense of reticence clung about Aix. Its carved cathedral doors were locked behind protecting covers but were marvels of mingled saints and sybils, canopied and garlanded, perfect in preservation. The centuries had left much. There were great, green marble columns from Roman days and Flemish tapestry from Canterbury Cathedral, above all the choir stalls in colors of soft rose and green and blue. All the faces were English, court portraits of Henry VIII's day. The old French story of how it got here is that the churchmen, seeing Henry taking all from those of the ancient faith, rolled up what they could and made off for the continent. The English version is they were made for

Canterbury but the Reformation coming along, they were sold elsewhere!

We stayed two nights in Aix; the second was starry and made us remember Daudet's praise of the Provençal stars. We left our comfortable Roman-bath hotel early to cross the pass and reach the crowded Riviera by night. Lively young blue-clad Alpine Chasseurs with berets rakishly tilted were garrisoned in Aix and we saw them quick-stepping between the high russet-colored houses, their band playing, brasses flashing in the sun. At the flourishing points, they again and again twirled their trumpets, flashing high in air, and caught them, as they marched, in sheer vivacity. We left Aix with their music in our ears, gay with the infection of their *elan,* their *esprit du corps.*

CHAPTER XIX

THE RIVIERA TO AVIGNON



THE road from Aix to Toulon took us across the heart of Provence. Thyme and lavender and rosemary grew on the rocks of the heights. The rich valleys were perfectly flat as if formed of sediment and in their smooth richness stretched to the mountain's base. Then began series of terraces, stone-faced up the fertile banks, making hundreds of feet of rising tiers of stone-set banks, planted in olives and grapes, up and up until the bare rocks outcropped on the mountainside.

Beyond to the east and south were ranges of crags, but with their contours softened by time. There was one great ascent on the road to a wild plateau of scrub pines and a long sinuous descent around bays of the mountainside with a view of the world spread out below. Again and again the feeling came: "I'd like to stay here"—which is the ultimate in a traveler's verdict.

A barrier of mountains rose between all this country and the sea. It was at a village called Coulin that we entered the highway from Marseille to

Toulon. There the mountains narrowed in upon us, a monastery and fortress ruins showed high above our heads as we entered the high-walled, north-and-south gorge of Ollioules.

It was from the robbers of this pass of Ollioules that the good bishop in *Les Misérables* brought back the chests of stolen church treasure. The bishop went out in the mountains alone on his mule. The mayor said: "But, the robbers?" "Ah," said the bishop, "you are right: I may meet them. They too must need be told about heaven."

For the only thoroughfare between two great cities and also the main approach to the Riviera, it was a wild country. We saw only a few motors, going north. At the base of the pass we came to a spot where one had burned from overheated brakes. We could see where frantic hands had clawed the sand to throw on the blaze, where shrubs were torn. There were scorched fragments of metal and a blackened spot on the road. A Sherlock Holmes might have told the make of car and nationality of the driver from the clues that were there!

For miles we were shut in the shadow of the cliffs under walls of rock, saffron yellow in the sunlight, with the yellow accented by the green tufts of aromatic shrubs clinging in the crevices. The heights about us were from four hundred to seven hundred metres in altitude.

We descended with the brawling water of a moun-

The Deserted Town of Les Baux

The Roman Pont du Gard

Terraces and Olives of Provence

Welling Waters of the Fontaine of Nimes

tain stream, Le Reppe, at the close left of the road. There was no sign of anyone living from one end of the pass of Ollioules to the other. This added greatly to its solemn grandeur. On the rocky heights, the Chain of the Stars and the Mount of the Angels, the peasants are very poor. As in the days of Jean Valjean they live on chestnuts. Stars and Angels may be their name but forever Victor Hugo's readers will think of Jean Valjean's gesture when they riveted his galley slave collar on him for stealing food for his children. He blessed the seven heads of descending height as he left them on these hills to starve.

Then came the stream-set village of Ollioules, guarded by two castle ruins and all blossoming with carnation beds, sheltered by straw mats. The distant gleaming sea was before us.

Toulon was entered through extremely narrow modern gates in her strong fortifications and was a city of red top-knotted sailors and navy men, with much coffee drinking on the sunny sidewalks.

The city suffered from its long galley slave record. Crime and prisons have left a blight upon it. The chained rowers, the stifling holds, the long rows of bending backs are gone. The harbor is filled with warships and tethered airships, and the steep rocky mountainsides rise beautifully back of the city. On those heights Napoleon placed his cannon and drove the English out of the port. It made his fame and

gave him his chance with the Convention in Paris. It was easy to see the strategic possibilities of the mountainside but it would need a Napoleon to get cannon up on them.

We ate on the sidewalk in the sun. All the little tables up and down the wide street were clattering with knives and forks, and then we were off by the shore road to Hyères.

In February this road was a bower of yellow, feathery mimosa in full blossom, the yellow trees backgrounded against dark pines. Villa after villa hid in old gardens. The mountains, the Maures, across the blue curve of the Mediterranean, were soft purple in color and showed lap beyond lap in violet depths. There was a sea of dark pine tree-tops across the levels. A great white rock rose high on the land side. Against this hill, an ancient ivory-colored town adhered, loosely girt with a rampart and towers, scrambling up the hillside. The towers and battlements of Hyères are not too definitely historic, but are more like the back scene of an opera.

It was a region of great hotels with gardens and golf courses and tea rooms. English people in sport clothes and with walking sticks were on every road and path, walking off a little weight—but putting it all on again at tea and dinner.

By the *plage,* on the actual seashore, down a road blue with the anchusa of our gardens, was a place to stay, bathed in the blue of the sea, of the sky

and of the distant hills, where the sun rose over three islands called the "Isles of Gold." It was of a Hyères like this that Stevenson said: it was "nearest heaven he ever hoped to see."

Onward the Riviera stretched to Ventimiglia and the Italian frontier, with a town and a setting to suit any taste. It is one long series of headlands and incurving bays. There are fishing hamlets, long stretches of wild beauty, modern towns and old ones, resorts for gambling and others for spending, hotels with silk stockinged flunkeys and very simple ones, lordly villas and seashore simplicity, all basking in the winter sun. We determined to take one drive to Bormes-les-Mimosas on the promontory of the violet hills.

It was through fields of spring flowers, past piles of white salt covered with red tiles, stacked on the marshes, past men playing never-ending games of bowls in attitudes like the discus throwers of the Romans. In a forest of cork trees we climbed the headland.

Bormes was a high-set village smothered in roses and yellow mimosa trees. A yew-shaded churchyard and round Saracen towers stood on the headland. It was our turning point, back through Toulon and the pass of Ollioules.

From a famous teashop in Hyères we carried a luncheon determined to eat it "on a bank where the wild thyme blows" on that aromatic summit com-

manding the view of half Provence. King René himself never had more pleasure from his hills than we, that noon. We finished with coffee on a tray in the car in the first russet-colored village in the valley.

Aix-en-Provence was again our stopping place, one hundred kilometres from Hyères. Again we heard the fountains tinkling in the streets, and bathed in water still hot from the days of the Romans.

Aix honors Mirabeau, the republican aristocrat, with a bronze statue. All such statues of town heroes are of a date after the Revolution because a public statue was a royal prerogative to that time and few " royal prerogatives " have survived! Balzac mentions that Mirabeau always paid his debts with promissory notes and Aix remembers that he was sent to prison at Chateam d'If for jumping a garden wall at his sister's complaint that a neighboring nobleman was looking at her. He bashed the promenading neighbor with an umbrella and together they rolled down the terrace snarling and clawing like cats. The gardeners picked them up. This was in the " good old times " one hears much spoken of in Provence.

With Avignon as the destination for our next night, we were off early, by St. Remy to Tarascon and Beaucaire, on the Rhone. These two old cities facing each other across the broad river are best known by the heroes of two books—Tartarin of Tarascon and Monsieur Beaucaire. Daudet tells of

Tartarin that he thought first of Arles but feared Arles might resent his satire. One knows the r-repeating sound of Tartarin de Tarascon settled it.

Tarascon seemed a bare, old town of minor houses when we drove into it where it would be easy to choose a house with a garden of heroic aspect, of "cocoanuts scarcely bigger than beets and baobabs in mignonette pots" as a setting for the gasconading lion hunter. The town can be circled and seen most intimately on a drive built where the walls once stood. There is so static a condition of life here, so little building, that the old houses looked as if left exposed to curious gaze, as if their shelter had just been torn away.

But Tarascon had a castle, a sort of story-book castle of great round towers with pictorial parapets rising from the waters of the Rhone, with its most impressive side and its entrance, on a weed-grown moat. King René held his court of painters and poets and troubadours here; it was the castle pictured as heaven at Aix. We went up to the old portcullised door and asked to go in. The guard, in the selfsame uniform as the man with the key at Fontevrault, peeked at us through a grating. It was against the rules to enter. "Not even King René's courtyard?" we queried.

"Well, if you'll be quick you can have one look! Just your heads, no more!" he whispered to us, as he opened the heavy door. We were faced by a

flight of great stone steps. The courtyard was high on a rock. Just at that moment a pair of well-tailored legs walked high across our vision—and stopped as if their owner had heard the keys. "It's himself!" said the guard. In a flash the door was barred, the guard at his grating and we were outside. "It's nothing inside but a state prison anyway," he consoled us through the bars. We knew what a blue and red uniform meant after this second experience.

And so over the long bridge to Beaucaire, a town of a famous annual fair in the Middle Ages. We went through some wide streets of very shrunken living, by great levées for Rhone floods and came to a dominating castled rock, once the seat and great stronghold of the Constable of the kingdom. It was now only an unguarded park. We climbed on foot to the castled summit through banks of bladed iris and came out upon the peaceful view over mountains, towns and plains. Beaucaire is the scene of Aucassin and Nicolette, the tale of twelfth-century lovers of Provence. In this square tower Aucassin's father put him, and Nicolette, the little Saracen maid, was shut up in the other high tower. She escaped and whispered to him at his grating and hid in the iris beds in the woods.

The soft spring sunshine, the distant hills and the grassy walk under the high towers were a lover's setting.

Said Aucassin to Nicolette:

> "The joys of heaven I'd forego
> To have you with me there below."

Even Napoleon was an author when the theme was Beaucaire. He wrote a pamphlet called *"Le Souper de Beaucaire,"* printed by the Convention out of public funds. It was a very republican conversation between a man of Nimes, of Montpellier and Marseille, which Napoleon carefully bought in, when he rose to power.

The day was fine. Sun-bleached Provence on the first days of March is springlike and fair. Being Sunday, the hunters were out even as Daudet says: "Game-bag on back, with fowling piece on shoulder, together with a tremor of hounds, of ferrets, of bugles. It's splendid to see! Unfortunately game is lacking, absolutely lacking." Apparently they still hunt the one old rogue of a hare called "The Rapid" and get great joy out of it, for we passed many on the road to Remoulins.

Here we entered the green, box-wood banks of the Gardon, a quiet minor stream, the sort of a quiet, lonely ravine where one expects nothing. Before us stood the Pont du Gard, great, magnificent, arch upon arch, arches upon those arches, spanning the valley, a sort of invincible thing, like meeting the Romans themselves.

Near or far its grandeur awed. Its great stones

stood as they were set without mortar 2,000 years ago. The human toil expressed by Pont du Gard was emphasized by the loneliness, by the trifling purpose of carrying a little stream across its back for Nimes, which already had its fountain.

We crossed the Pont du Gard on an eighteenth-century roadway built against the heavy lower arches, under the shadow of eleven great ones above, feeling as if some centurions of Agrippa or Augustus might appear to order us off.

Across the uplands the path of the water had vanished, but we followed its old course to Uzès, passing a puzzling villa of Ionic columns whose half-modern grandeur was moldering away. The church-towered town had arcaded streets crowded close around a ducal château whose walls rose from alleys, dark and dirty. The rough, cobbled drive led obscurely to a pillared entrance and courtyard and grandeur of tower and turret. Uzès had the undisturbed setting of the days before the Revolution.

The day was far spent when we descended with caution the long steep hill to the bridge across the Rhone into Avignon. The last rays of sunset lit up the Palace of the Popes illumining it against an evening sky. Its great bulk dominated the old city. We crossed the wooded island before it and the river, and came under the town walls at the bridge end, and there turned into the courtyard of the famous old Hotel de l'Europe. We found it filled

with the motors and chauffeurs, trunks and bags of English and American tourists bound to the Riviera. This was one of the few times we had telegraphed ahead for rooms, a necessary thing in Avignon in the early spring.

All the world stays in this old vine-covered hotel with its forecourt of long ago, Napoleon, Hawthorne, Young, Stendhal, Mill, Henry James, princes, potentates and powers. It is an old French inn with a reputation.

There was great bustle of motor departure early in the morning, to be seen and heard through slatted shutters, but we had no thought of hurrying, rather of much loitering where loitering was so good. And so up to the Pope's palace, the fortress built by the French Popes, seven of them, who for seventy years stayed away from Rome and ruled here by the Rhone. They quarreled themselves out of Rome and bought Avignon and its province from Joanna, Queen of Naples—but got out of paying for it, for Joanna had to be cleared of the murder of a husband and after being declared innocent by the Pope, she went on her way without collecting any gold. No man claims the record in Avignon is elevating but an allowance must be made that their motives and lives are best known to posterity by what Petrarch and Dante, strong Italian partisans, say of Avignon when they wanted an Italian Pope and a return to Rome.

Appallingly bare and gaunt the palace seemed when near and on entering, for it was wrecked in the Revolution, stripped of its entrance and moat in Napoleon III's day and used as an infantry barracks down to the 1900's. Nevertheless it is the largest building of the Middle Ages in Europe and there is lore of its occupants for every taste. "Surely a ghost in every room" was Hawthorne's feeling.

When I first saw it the great halls were being cleared of triple layers of floors, put in for barracks. There was a sense of a great place degraded. Now these great halls show their simple dignity, the sunshine again streams in the great windows and a few crimson velvet benches and great old tapestries sent down by the government, give a touch of rich color to the grey-white interior. It makes the palace live again. Its dignity has returned. We walked through the heart of thick walls interminably honeycombed with staircases, through the long vaulted, vistaed passage in the wall, on a stone floor hollowed by the feet of cardinals and popes. High windows let us look out at the eastern mountains or at Mignard, the painter's house on a street below. Best remembered was the one room whose walls were a deep and flowery green, with scenes from country life—a little gay for a prelate, but even the chapels were cheerful. Its fortress frowns were external.

One is not happier for knowing the villainy, the poisoning, the scandals of the old Palace but Daudet

has solved the need of a picture of its life by telling of the Pope and his loved mule. The mule was led up the stairs to the tower, where it stood, ears outlined against the sky. Ignominiously rescued by a rope the mule saved up for years a retributive kick, biding a time for revenge upon the Pope's favorite who put him there.

Across the open "place" was the front of a building—it is strangely without adequate backing, called the Mint, that always remains in a mental picture of Avignon, an Italian-like building, almost windowless, ornamented by the two greatest stone festoons of fruit and flowers known to architecture. It embodies the saying "nothing of that age is ever overdone."

On the rock, a little higher than the palace, a recent garden but a felicitous one gave a vantage point where the sunset put a golden light on the old city and on the old, broken, arched bridge of St. Benizet that French children have always sung of. "On the bridge of Avignon all the world dance in the rond," with their pretty little bow and scrape: *"Comme ça!"*

We could see the Rhone at the base of the high rock on which we sat and the course of the stream for miles. It was once a highway for the world. Boats floated down with the current and were towed back by great oxen who swam through the bridge arches. The Rhone was as deserted as the Palace.

There were churches great and small in Avignon; their bells are extolled in prose and poem. There were narrow streets with mouldy, melancholy smells. There were antique shops of superlative interest, and there was one place that had to be found, even though the street curbs did pinch our wheels at one corner. It was the house of Crillon, on the Rue de la Masse, down by the ancient church of St. Didier. A gay old house it was, hard to see on its fourteen-foot street, with its hundred feet of high Renaissance front, be-garlanded in stone. A long set of portrait bas-reliefs were between the third and fourth floor and the great doors had bound garlands of oak leaves framing huge round knockers.

An old resident of Avignon had made us promise we would open this oak door, dash in past the concierge and see the grand staircase before he could pounce on us! We dashed—the staircase was white marble, the balusters four-sided and fat, great brass spheres marked all the posts. It was the Henry IV staircase; the one he ran up crying: "Crillon, Crillon, I've won one battle without you!" It's a house fit for a man who carried a white plume and who could boast as gracefully as that.

We closed the oak door with its garlands behind us and returned by way of the often etched street, the Rue de la Teinturie where enormous water-wheels sluggishly drippy with moss, turned in a stream that ran below low walls down the street.

The Bishop's Garden Aix-en-Provence

The Pass of Ollioules

A Thoroughfare Under the Clock Tower of Aix-en-Provence

Proud Doors of Aix-en-Provence

It was here the mob of Marseillais came singing a strange new song on their way to Paris. Here they rested and feasted and strengthened their numbers.

Strange and terrible poverty, unclean misery, was here in Avignon, something we had not seen in any other part of France. There were old streets descended into by steps, full of smells evil and medieval, where we saw bent figures at obscure lamp-lit industries. As a city it offered contrasts, for it is said to have a reticent society of wealthy Protestants, never intermarrying or mixing with others.

Archibald Marshall, speaking of Avignon, said he saw it once in a motor but came back to see it on foot! We had quite another theory as to a motor and its use. As a means of getting to ancient gates it has no equal! In the morning we were off to Villeneuve-les-Avignon whose towers and walls looked across, from a territory always French, upon the domain of the Popes, watching the old bridge-end and threatening the river traffic through the centuries.

Villeneuve was *neuve* in the 1300's. It occupied all the sunny bank of the Rhone facing Avignon and had arcaded streets, now grass-grown, and half occupied palaces of cardinals, with grand staircases and fascinating courtyards, mansions with windows blocked to save the window tax, and an old hospice with a Pope's tomb, used as a rabbit hutch until Prosper Merimee saved it.

Perhaps as singular a thing as there is in France is a hive of poverty, of squatter type, here in Villeneuve, in a ruined and enormous Chartreuse. Their tenure of land is that of fragmentary purchase of the monastery at the time of the Revolution. Thus some families live in the refectory, others have the Abbot's quarters with aureoled saints and a whole colony are housed in lanes of monkish splendor formed by the cloister, around the beautiful domed fountain of St. John.

The entrance gate to this animated poverty, this squalor in beauty, was through a corinthian columned arch, under a classic pediment, with a superb coat of arms in stone.

There is romance in parking a car in the Vale of Benediction, or in climbing to the double-towered gateway of St. Andre, the fortress France kept to guard Papal aggressions on the river. Its walls now enclosed a lone guardian and a closed villa. From the stone roofs of the towers there is no lovelier view than the circling one commanding Avignon, its walls, its bridges, its palace and belfries, the Rhone in its great sweeps, the white-topped Alps and the great bulk of Mont Ventoux. In the plain of the Rhone could be seen the glint of spades in the sun where toilers were turning the soil by the delving as old as Adam. From these towers a young artillery officer pointed his guns at the Marseillais singing in Avignon and when they were gone on, ordered his cannon

out this old gate and hauled them down to Toulon and saved the port for France. He spoke French with an accent and spelt his name Buonaparte. He found the bubble reputation in these cannon mouths from the desolated fortress of St. Andre.

In the evening light we returned to Avignon. Again, the face of the palace seemed illumined, the golden light restored the papal glories, intensified the long line of the machicolated wall and parapets, quickened the gates and barbicans of the old city of the Popes on the Rhone.

CHAPTER XX

THE RHONE VALLEY

THERE is a satisfaction in motoring through a town gate, another in entering the old coaching yard of an inn and still another in going around a walled town. Jericho had ancient facilities for encircling, but none of the walled towns in France have had the advantage of a driving road around the outside of the walls except Avignon. The ramparts were miles long and were wonderfully perfect, though partly by restoration, with forty towers and ten gates. The walls were not so high as to look prohibitive to scaling, but this was due to the moat having been filled in.

This encircling of Avignon was a prelude to a leisurely day spent in making the classic pilgrimage to Vaucluse which we proposed to visit by the Mont Favet road, a byway on the landward side of the fortifications of Avignon. In flat country, under a black-green windbreak of cypress, we came to a square house, redeemed from the absolute commonplace by a double avenue of trees. Here John Stuart Mill wrote for twenty years his ideas on suffrage so ahead of his time. He might have had a palace, a tower, a hill, a view of rivers but chose this in haste

when his wife, newly married but long-loved, was ill.

We crossed the most fertile of plains to Vaucluse, aiming for the mountains rising abrupt in the east, their rosy white rocks thinly covered with grey-green. To the near north, one high mountain, Ventoux, loomed pure and white in snow against the blue sky. Hot sunshine was on our level road. There were yellow oziers by the roadside and in the fields grapes and low mulberry trees. The water of the River Sorgue spread in old irrigation ditches across all the plain. At one place a silk factory in an old monastery sat among the pines and cypresses of a walled garden. L'Isle-sur-Sorgue was the one town, a place of little industries with waterways called Sorgettes in its streets, with foot-bridges into house gardens filled with cherry trees and roses.

We followed the road into a gorge and came to a romantic-looking, primitive village, under a towering limestone cliff. It was a village of bridges and a tunneled rock, of great-girthed trees and little inns, like scenic ones in a play, with aproned innkeepers at the door. The Sorgue, a wide and rushing blue stream, hurried and eddied in a semicircle with all the village facing it. An upward look at the high cliffed mountain explained the meaning of "Vaucluse." All paths, all advance, all living, the valley itself, the wide river, end at that rocky wall. It is *Vau-cluse,* the valley closed. Petrarch came when

it was a sylvan solitude to make a home in his exile from Italy, to have a simple place for his books, a garden in the music of waters, a secluded paradise with a faithful servant and a churchly neighbor on a castled height. Kings and poets and lovers—Francis I was all three!—for centuries have wept here, all at different spots, have written sonnets and put up commemorative tablets, but all are gone.

Vaucluse had a paper mill, a long unsightly building with startling blue window shades. It cowered along the river under the cliff to use the water power. We drove on past it to a turning spot at the road end. As Americans we were able to eliminate it from the scene, having much practice in closing an eye to a factory in transatlantic spots of beauty. A poetic path ascended beside a rushing river in a piney glade, set with needle rocks. The mountain wall rose to the zenith directly in our faces, abrupt and vertical, so that we walked to it and put our hands against it. A clear, green, stirring pool was at its base.

The imprisoned river roared in the inside of the mountain. A strange beauty of early spring wiped away the sordid, baseless stories the centuries have piled up about Petrarch and Laura and left us the poet beside his fountain, dreaming and writing of an unattainable, loved Laura, seen in his youth and living always in his dreams.

We returned in the early evening through the sun-

baked landscape to dine with friends, long dwellers in Avignon, talking of their garden which gave them black cherries in May, apricots in July, peaches in August, grapes in September. "Figs?" "Oh, they are all over the ground and when we go to pick them up the donkey doesn't like it. He wants them all himself!"—a diet which irresistibly suggested figs from thistles.

We were outward bound for Orange in the morning up the Rhone valley on the great north-and-south thoroughfare from the Mediterranean to Lyon. The Rhone was within sight, with its castled heights. We took a byroad through miles of cobbly stones and poor land, to go to Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Here a low, rich-looking rise of ground faced south out of the wind. Every foot was planted in vines, every chilly blast was cut off by low olive trees, to form the famous vineyard of the popes, where riding muleback they came to play country squire at vintage time. The ruby-brilliant wine of Châteauneuf-du-Pape is known to epicures to-day as centuries ago. Rival *caves* announced their domains and vintages modestly, on property valued from its fame, the most highly of all French agricultural land. A brown village clustered about a square machicolated tower whose windows showed daylight against the sky. The old pleasure house was a hollow shell, almost one-sided like a theatrical scene.

By mid-forenoon we had rounded the shoulder of

Mont Ventoux and entered Orange alongside an esplanade, where six hundred mounted Berbers were drawn up, all on pure white, small-headed Arab horses. Recruited for France from her African colonies, they sat their saddles superbly. Bearded, tawny-skinned, they had turbans bound in dark color on their heads. A white veil covered each turban and came out under its band and flowed over ears and neck to disappear under a great vermilion-orange cloak. Each had a short gun across his back, and a drawn sword, up-pointed in his hand. Booted and spurred they sat straight-backed in their shovel saddles, like Thackeray's "proud paynim." A bugle blew a long fanfare, and like the Bashibazouks of fighting fame, four abreast, unperturbed on caracoling horses, with guidons of white horse-tails fluttering above them, they advanced into the narrow stone streets of Orange. We followed in their wake into the city which gave stadholders to Holland, a king to England and names to our New Jersey towns.

A heavy rain made Orange grey. Rain had not bothered us much on our journey and this rain cleared the narrow pavements of strollers and idlers and all the joyous genealogy that fill the pavements in French towns, so that we dodged no Orangemen as an Irishman might say. We drew up under the one hundred and twenty foot wall of the stupendous, uncompromising black façade of the Roman theatre. Under umbrellas we went with the custodian into the

open theatre whose seven thousand seats are cut as a hemicycle in the rock. The bare one hundred and twenty feet of front wall was the back scene of the stage. A groove showed where the curtain dropped 1,800 years ago. The old man talked of Sophocles and left our shared umbrellas to show how the voices carried when the Comédie Française came. Looking down on us from a high crag against the rainy sky was the ruined seat, literally the house of Orange.

Orange's farewell to us was the triumphal arch of Marius, the finest old one in France. Its triple arches sat superbly free. Even in the rain its proud beauty grew on us and we drove around and around it, liking the way it had been mended, liking its corinthian columns, its battles and trophies, its coffered vaulting and its ends, for all four sides were beautiful.

The north-and-south road of France, on the bank of the Rhone, wide and white in the limestone regions of Provence now changed to tarvia and dark stone. We traveled near the mountains and lost sight of the river for miles but every rock that neared the water was castle crowned, strategically alert, dark and dominating against the sky, as we encircled its base.

At a little place called Pierrelatte, we turned up the river valley of the Berre, eastward for twenty kilometres into the mountains, through an eroded country, with bright red earth. Spiky branches of broom grew along the roads, with yellow blossoms. For

miles tight-planted cypresses, clipped and hacked into ten foot line walled the road.

The deep blue Alps were before us, tipped with snow. Walled villages were on heights and hillsides, some in ruin, and from the road map we fitted musical names to them, Chantemerle and Aiguebelle. Over this road many a time had rolled the chariot and four of Mme. de Sévigné, bound, as we, to the palace of Grignan.

On the uplands, the fields were rich and were planted close in olives and grapes. Suddenly the château of Grignan, a palace not a fortress, was in sight on an isolated hill, filling the whole flattened hilltop. Beyond were the distant blue and snow-capped mountains. Below the belvideres of Grignan, below its terrace walls, a village clung skirt-like around the rocks with small mulberry trees in the intervening valley.

We left the car in the village at the foot of Mme. de Sévigné in modern bronze, with her inevitable letter in process of writing, pen poised in air. A narrow road spiraled up the castled rock. Poor rabbit-warrens of houses lined the ascending path, crowded against the rock or hanging over the edge. The guardian was mystified as to how we had reached his door dry on such a rainy day, as we went with him onto the stone terrace, still balustraded at the edge, the largest anywhere in France, abruptly elevated over the village so that we did not see the

poor or their houses but walked aloft with the mountains and beauty in formal gardens marked in flower urns and green walks. Façade after façade of the great palace, unbelievably immense, stood as a shell with hollow-eyed windows as if it had been stopped in process of construction. Rather, with Grignan it was process of destruction.

Mme. de Sévigné, "without heart but full of spirit" as Balzac defined her, looked upon it as a great marriage for her daughter to be Countess of Grignan. In her fifteen-month visits here she told of guests like a court, three tables at once for dinner, the grouse, the sweet smells of the herbs on the hills, the gardens. Her incessant letters when absent urged her daughter to keep on with the building. The "façade of the prelates" showed her advice to get money from the family uncles, the bishop of Carcassonne and the bishop of Arles, succeeded. Poor lady, she died alone in a superb chamber whose fireplace was still beautiful—and her daughter, so loved and so cold, was too occupied with pride of living to be with her.

In the Revolution, Grignan was ordered to be stripped and unroofed and sold as the property of an emigré. The rain fell on its floors, the winds blew through its rooms. Timbers, carvings and stones were taken, stolen or bought. It was always looked upon as an affront to man and God for a pleasure terrace to be built over an old church, and

one avenged in the Revolution, when Sévigné, the seigneurs and all their kin were torn from their graves.

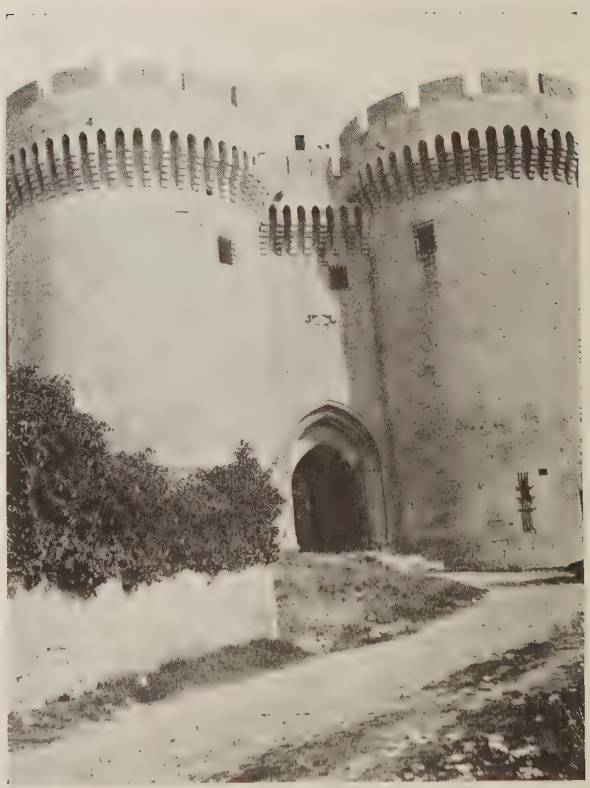
Having completely encircled the palace-crowned hill, we returned to the bronze lady still writing her letter by our car, with rain dripping off her nose and pen. The dry shelter was very welcome for we were wet through our heavy traveling coats. Penetrating trickles could be felt on our shoulders as we left this place of the most terrible contrasts in living, a palace, impossibly extravagant, crushing down on the heads of a dependent peasantry and their church.

By the time we reached Montélimar we were again on the north-and-south thoroughfare, with *essence* stations and motors. We stopped in one of the shoulder-to-shoulder shops for supplies and a change of tire necessitated by a sabot nail from some forester's shoe and bought nougat, renowned in this town, and hot coffee to counteract our wet coats. At the next town called Livron we saw wet soldiers at dummy machine-gun practice. With single mules, both urged and pushed, the young soldiers managed to get two wheeled frames over banks and stretched cables and make-believe impediments in great haste and in the steady rain.

Time got away from us in small delays on a rainy day such as this but comparing notes with two Englishmen later in Touraine, we found what was rain with us, was snow on a high-set road on the other side of the Rhone. In their open car they were very,

THE PALACE OF GRIGNAN IN PROVENCE

Ancient Arcades of Villeneuve



The Gate of St. Andre Opposite Avignon

very cold and saw low-powered French cars in the snow being dug out with spades.

With one hundred and fifty kilometres behind us, we approached Valence, a brightly lighted city, by a street with a long line of high electric poles. Its wet asphalt mirrored the lights of other cars crowding in for the night and disappearing into a covered courtyard behind the hotel. We found what Stendhal called a *snog* hotel—he thought this very English. Its warm rooms, hot water and good dinner made us forget the downpour of Grignan and so thoroughly were our coats dried for us that between the rain and the fire, the sleeves of my driving coat were three inches shorter! It is not an unpleasant necessity, however, to look forward to buying a coat in Paris.

Valence was the capital of the old duchy of Valentinois, a duchy treated like a pocket-piece by the sovereigns of France. It was handed with its title and one hundred men and a great income, as a favorite's recompense to Cæsar Borgia by Louis XII when he brought the Pope's bull of divorce, for Borgia was a great acquirer. He was a cardinal but changed his red hat for a war helmet, a duchy and a wife! Again the duchy and its income were presented by Henry II to Dian de Poitiers much to the wrath of Catherine de Medici, but the scene of their quarrels was in Touraine.

From the open esplanade we had a free outlook

across the Rhone to the snow-covered mountains of Auvergne. A castled crag asserted itself dark against the white, at a pictorial spot. Some who have added fame to Valence stood stationed in bronze in her streets but not Borgia, Dian or Napoleon. However, Valence treasures its memory of Napoleon, stationed here on his first assignment as a young lieutenant, of the Grenoble regiment, when just out of military school. He was poor and hard pressed for money and certain old bookshops and lodgings are associated with his name. His brother officers were royalists. He was a republican, but a quiet one, and there is ominous meaning in the fact that in the 1790's a captain's promotion came to him through seniority.

In the quarter where Bonaparte lived, where narrow streets are almost alleys, were curious houses of rich merchants. An old and moldering one called the Maison des Têtes, just between Gothic and Renaissance, had reliefs of heads under the eaves blowing with puffed cheeks, as if to represent the four winds. Another had a stairway of stone climbing in a stone cage, looking out in a courtyard, small and all beautiful within.

It was our plan to go up in the mountains of Auvergne, to visit the château of Chavagnac near the village of St. George-d'Aurac, as well as Le Puy on its volcano top. A small relief map of France which we frequently glanced at, to see what kind of

a world lay beyond the day's horizon, showed abrupt heights and many of them. We had been told by many French to make use of the *Syndicat d'Initiative,* a system of offices maintained in every town of any size, to assist visitors and incidentally and pleasantly to exploit the resources of the neighborhood. Our question was: " In what condition shall we find the roads in the mountains between Le Puy and Chavagnac? "

Their answer was brought to us at the hotel in an hour, so courteous were they. They had telephoned their representatives at Le Puy and Aurac. The road was closed to traffic indefinitely under seventy centimetres of snow. We could not even approach Le Puy. How glad we were the snowy mountains showed from Valence and how efficient was the Syndicat!

So we found ourselves making an afternoon start for Vienne on the direct route to Lyon, instead of to Lafayette's natal château and chose the picturesque side of the river, the west, through Tournon. It is a town happy with the first suspension bridge in France. We passed a road marked on the map with fourteen danger dots on its wriggling route up the mountains to Annonay where the brothers Montgolfier first rose above the earth in their famous balloon, one hundred and forty years ago. A place dangerous with rocks and high winds, but according to old prints, they were tethered over a fire!

The country had changed markedly. We had now left the south. No longer were there any olives or cypresses or live oaks and mulberries were few. Little plum trees grew in long disciplined lines, all neatly headed with purple twigs. There were now poplars and willows. The land was no longer parched or dusty. We were in the Midi and each passer on the road greeted us with country cordiality. All afternoon the road was by the river running flush and fleet at our side, under raking ridges of rocks, past vineyards of the famed Hermitage wines, bristling with four-foot stakes.

We came early across the bridge into Vienne and could easily have made Lyon but this was the week of the annual *Foire* and the fair has hotel-filling qualities that made it better to lodge outside. Vienne was a shabby old city entered on a low-set street under the broad steps of the church of St. Maurice. Its front was corroded by time into a yellow smudge but strangely showing its Gothic beauty like something seen in the dusk.

We lodged in a forbidding-looking hotel, noisy with willing service and good intentions. The snow on the mountains had put a chill in the air, but we explored the old quarters and found the fluted pillars of a Roman temple lacking that perfection of proportion that is in Nimes, but marvelous to find in the purlieus of a shabby town. Boys were playing rough games in a square in whose walls were in-

corporated large and very visible parts of more Roman temples. Stranger still the old church had its long unbroken nave set with base-burners. Had an American sent them?—six were in a row down the nave. Colonel Sellers' candle surely burned within, for a faint glow gave no heat.

A military band with much clashing of brasses and noise of heady drums came up the road in the morning as we set out under a welcome sunny sky. We had intention to photograph a tall, white Roman obelisk called the "Needle," and then be on our way to Lyon. Never did a picture compose so well: a plane tree vista, the slim, stone pyramid against a bright blue sky; a woman carrying water buckets and some children in the foreground; the sun behind us. When this picture was developed the obelisk wasn't there! White stone and blue sky had exactly the same light value and photographed as one surface. However, we didn't know that as we set out on the steepest and longest of children-bestrewn hills. Laurence Sterne tells of an awful hill seven miles long, he called it, on this road to Lyon. He had to get out of the coach and push. We decided he must have fallen asleep after his walk on the first hill for there were seven of them on the way. It was a country of unfenced pastures and wheat fields, and a long scattering line of manufacturing approach to the old velvet-making city—the one city we found that had abandoned its octroi gates.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE ROADS OF BURGUNDY

LYON, " honest and right-minded " as Lamartine called it, was busy with its annual fair, an interesting mixture of simplicity and commercial enterprise, especially strong in the matter of agricultural implements and tractors, in open trellised booths, with the familiar names of American makers. It did not seem to be an important enough affair to stir a city of half a million but every hotel was full. Here and here only in France did we see a few spenders of profiteer type in distinction from the unostentatious gourmandizers of other places.

The city was widespread on the hills but centred on a tongue of level land between the Rhone at its turn to the Alps, and its tributary the Saone, which continues the Rhone's affairs to the north. In Lyon these rivers are parallel, and are bridged in confusing frequency at both right and left of the business thoroughfares.

Though silk weaving has been going on since the days of that luxury lover, Francis I, we saw no

silk or velvet shops but did see French offices with familiar American names.

Always associated with manufacturing, it surprised us by having Caracella for a native, he whose Roman bath still outdoes any other man's in size and luxury, and Caligula remembered as founding a school!

We looked about the city and explored an art gallery delightfully set around the gardened courts of a suppressed convent, and found such opposites in modern methods as Meissonier and Puvis de Chavannes, both Lyonnais born. While there the car had stood in front of the Hôtel de Ville on the square where DeThou and Cinq Mars of reality and romance were beheaded. We had arrived in this part of the long city by a narrow street, so the narrow street on the other corner of the Hôtel de Ville seemed the way to return. A gesticulating multitude, grief and distress on their faces, waved their hands and beat their hearts. What could be the matter! What had we done? The teamsters seemed to be suffering the most. They were coming toward us. Had we been in the path of cannon practice, distress could not have been more actively shown. We were wrong on a one-way street! Backing out was not difficult in front of the advancing traffic; it was certain nothing was behind, for all observe the unwritten law to enter not!

Our luncheon was very sophisticated and delight-

ful and the potatoes were not such as are associated with the city's name! Then, to the upper floor of the Bourse where was a collection most appropriate to the city, inspired by its past work, and inspiring for its future. It was the *Musée des Tissus,* where every silk fabric ever made and every process of making it, had been garnered. The costumes seemed, if worn, enough to people half the châteaux we had seen. Velvets of the Renaissance, in greens and ambers and Genoese reds, were surely verified from Paul Veronese. What better fixing of a date of manufacture could there be?

Going northeast to Bourg, we saw the Rhone no more, and the Saone only once to cross it, for we entered a long mileage of plateau, hesitant as to whether it should be marsh, meadow or pond. It was the first landscape of lakes but they were not in any way mountain-set, but looked more like undrained water that couldn't get away. The eastern horizon was serrated by the distant Jura mountains.

Bourg was a pleasant, sleepy, country town with a hotel spotlessly clean and at night we dined on the renowned chicken of the district of Bresse, served with pride.

Before dark we had set out to look for the church of Brou built by the Emperor Maximilian's daughter, Margaret of Burgundy, the busy, governing, diligent regent in the Netherlands for a score of years. It was built as the tomb of her husband,

Philibert le Beau, who died in his youth and hers. Matthew Arnold wrote of Margaret on her palfrey white, riding to see the building rise. After several kilometres of dwindling houses we came to a roadside church in a bare field, without setting old or new. There was a peak-roofed monastery but the bareness belonged to the group. We had thought only to locate it but the custodian told us we would see it well in the dusk. The shadows were falling in the ghostly, empty, cold interior. The flamboyant beauty of the lonely church, our echoing footsteps—gave an understanding of it all. Margaret came of a monument-building family; all her forbears stand in bronze in Innsbruck. Here in her husband's province, remote yet accessible from her difficult regency she built, for what Arnold meant: " So sleep, forever sleep, O princely pair! "

The chanting monks are gone. The last light from cold, greenish-grey sky came in the windows, all seemed fresh, intricate, marvelous, and through the carved rood screen the three tombs of Philibert, his mother and Margaret, with their sleeping figures, lay guarded by shadowy cherubs and angels.

In the morning sunlight the church looked as if the sculptors and the craftsmen had just finished it, as it looked to the builders in the days of Gothic magnificence—a surfeit of lace-like stone.

For one hundred and thirty-four kilometres our road was to Dijon through meadows and pastures,

with pools in their corners reflecting the sky and now and then woodland areas and chimneys of iron mills in the distance. Here and there, we passed old, cheerful villages and the town of Tournus gathered about a bridge with meadow walks along the Saone. As ever in France in the open *place* was a statue to the famous son. We drove close to see who he was. It was the painter Greuze. It made us look about. There was never anyone here to buy pictures. The Revolution took away his world in Paris. He came back to Tournus and died very poor. When Napoleon heard of it, he said: "I would have given him three Sèvres vases full of gold had I known, for his *cruches cassées.*"

Past Tournus this road had been a thoroughfare to the war-front and was picked out in unescapable hard-edged holes. We sought to avoid this by taking a lane that, on the map, seemed to reach the same destination, Beaune. It tangled us in marshes, snared itself in village intricacies and was bridgeless at brooks, and moreover was bestrewn with sabot nails. As an experiment it had interest, but we returned, chastened, to the worn highway and went through Beaune in the dusk without stopping, determined to spend Sunday in the comforts and beauties of Dijon where it is preëminently possible to enjoy oneself because all the Burgundians have been doing so for centuries and a visitor falls in line. The very garage of the hotel was entered by a long

alley of bull's-eyes like round-leaded windows, the seasons' bottle-ends stacked as evidence of good cheer! The city was redolent with whiffs of comfortable cookery and the spicy smells of its bakeshops whose windows were piled high with loaves of *pain d'épice*. "Gingerbread" does not express this Dijon specialty. *Pain d'épice* is made of honey and spice and other things nice and the huge elastic loaves, judging by the quantity in stock, must be consumed by the cubic metre. In the form of little "canonesses," silver wrapped and juicy hearted, no more delectable mouthful can be imagined!

Dijon accomplished a very large and busy appearance, helped by old ducal palaces, whole streets of free-set, pyramidal roofs and much antique grandeur, with a population under one hundred thousand. It is peculiarly a city to which to adapt Mark Twain's theory that though the sights are many they can easily be avoided! We rambled all Sunday on sunny streets of low-set houses under roofs gayer than any before on our journey, of many colored tile. The Ducal palace furnishes a scene for Charles the Bold and a dukedom that was as free as a kingdom. Its enormous stone kitchen with vaulted roof was sanctuary to scurrying cooks in ducal days of feasting. The museum made no demands, it was a vast entertaining series of wax-floored rooms of the old palace and had as its culmination the banqueting hall, timber-roofed, with beams in soft golds and red and blue.

A great-throated chimney glorified the whole end of the room, with stonework flowing in flamboyant, flame-like lines. This room, where they feasted and were happy, was the place to which the fragments of the tombs of Philip the Bold and Jean the Fearless were brought after the Revolution. Great black marble slabs, mourning statuettes of churchmen, the ducal pair and fluttering wings of little cherubs were there, but when one thinks of them crashed to fragments, torn from their settings, they had less appeal than the old hall.

Burgundy—the name has an infectiously happy sound. There was pleasure to be had driving loiteringly in the ancient streets, stopping to walk in the Prince of Condè's garden laid out by Le Notre in his great day. The shadow of the tall, dominating ducal tower, where King René was once a prisoner, fell across our path many times as we explored for the famed splendor of seignorial façades and were happily invited into a house and garden of the 1500's now a boy's school.

One whole street end was filled with a bevy of gargoyles ranged in spouting line. The hours were struck for us by two figures on a clock, that have been hammering away since the 1300's. Froissart's opinion of this same timekeeper was: *Le plus beau,* and it pleased Dijon to have it as a gift from their duke, a perquisite from a vanquished town in Flanders.

Always in Dijon there is a touch of the Low Countries, a type of civic pride, a comfortable prosperity, a scrubbing and water-throwing cleanliness, a heaviness of frame in both men and women.

We traveled as far as Beaune under the *Côte d'Or,* the "golden hillsides," and saw the vine-dressers tying the grapes, each vine on a high-set stake. Anatole France tells there was a time when roaming Armagnacs used to tear the coats off the peasants, when the cows and sheep knew enough to run in a tower when an alarm bell rang to summon the vine-dressers from these now peaceful fields.

In daylight and leisure we found Beaune—Dijon twits it for being slow—a mellow city with a wealth of old house-fronts and street corners, some with suspended tourelles. There was precious glass in its church windows, better than any we had seen in *grisaille,* with scenes and armorial bearings etched in black lines on mellow color and church doors of oak in forty-paneled beauty. Chimes sounded the drowsy hours in the quiet street.

We drew up at a doorway overhung by a pendant porch, all blue like the starry skies, above our heads. Where else could one enter a building still fresh and fair, used continuously as this old Hôtel Dieu of Beaune, a hospital for five hundred years. The large rectangular paved courtyard had a wooden galleried, two-story building around it, above which rose the gayest of steep roofs cut with a long series

of dormer gables and all covered in snake-skin tiles —tiles of just the right green and yellow and red, diapered in dot-set diagonals.

Centuries-old ways go on in the Hôtel Dieu. We entered the hall of the *Malades* to find the whole building open to the high timbered roof. At one end a broad fireplace had a cheerful, adequate wood-fire burning on shiny steel andirons. Down each wall, were bed after bed, of tawny wainscot, with square tops, like four posters, hung in turkey-red. Each bed-curtain made a seclusion for a chair and a little table, set out—it was noontime—with a pewter porringer with ears, and a tankard. An aged woman sat sewing by the fire. There was quiet, cleanliness and peace. A nun in blue had an old gentle face under a medieval headdress emerging on her head in sail-like folds and falling to her bodice waist, with a white wing pinned to each sleeve. She was cutting huge, crusty loaves of bread in the bend of her arm with a hooked knife. An appetizing smell came from a copper cauldron. Long curtains of turkey red hung at the far end of this peaceful antique hall. They could be looped aside easily, and behind them was the chapel open to the ill and the old as they sat by the fire or lay in bed or walked about in the noble old room.

Sunny stone benches were in the courtyard, there were well-heads of wrought iron and courtyards and gardens beyond and many more wards and staircases

and towers. Everywhere oak floors gleamed with care. Tapestries, coffers and tables were there. One takes a long look at the portrait of Nicholas Rollin in velvet and sable, at the man who could found such a hospital long before the world was thinking of caring for the sick and poor, and endow it with twenty-two vineyards. We remembered what Louis XI, his contemporary, said of him: "He had made enough poor to necessitate building a hospital to keep them in!" We left the sunny repose of the quiet place thoroughly agreeing,—for once,—with Viollet-le-Duc—"it is worth while to be ill in Beaune."

Our route was planned to cross the mountains of the Morvan that shelter Burgundy and separate it from the centre of France, from Paris and Touraine, to travel west as far as Tours, in unusual and little visited places like the Morvan and the plains and marshes of the Sologne.

The vineyards of famous names *clos* this and *clos* that, with vines close-set on every available foot, were on the hillsides, for miles out of Beaune. Soil, hillside and sun are the requisites. Every vine is grafted on American root-stalks which are immune to deadly phylloxera. The small villages of this wine-raising country were quaint roofed, a few slated with thin stones, many with flat tiles. All were clean, picturesque and prosperous. Every roadside sign-post had a veritable wine list of names: Vougeat, Cham-

bertin, Beaune, Pommard were there—names of golden hillsides facing the east.

A family of willow chair venders had stopped by the roadside and set down four chairs from their stock and were eating and drinking in comfort. As we passed they waved their knives in cheerful flourishes. Great views rewarded the arrival at summits but the road immediately descended. Near Nolay in a narrow valley where a north-and-south road scrambled down and up again across our road, in a tangle of ravine and stream was a stony, scattered village with its humble cottages and roofs clinging up the mountainside to a high-perched, turreted château, set far up against the sky, the château of Rochepot.

The family of Sadi-Carnot who have not always lived in lofty places own it, but it is Philippe Pot's of the 1400's for all time, a great Burgundian whose knightly effigy in armor, carried on the shoulders of eight mourning monks carved in stone, was brought to the Louvre from the silent monastery of Cîteaux. There is an old love story told of these turrets on the rock and of this road twisting down across the valley from the south. Young and in love, Philippe Pot was pledged to a crusade. He was taken prisoner and for the Sultan's pleasure was put in a cage with a lion, but was given a small scimiter. He acted quickly and slashed the lion's paws. The lion licked his bleeding toes. He cut the lion's tongue.

The lion roared. Philippe Pot drove the scimiter down the lion's throat. The Sultan loved valor. "Go home to your lady!" he cried. Philippe Pot begged his bread home to Rochepot "singing from Palestine, Lady love, Welcome me home!" He found his château hung in black; all thought him dead—but in Dijon she waited and they lived long on this rocky height of Rochepot.

After Nolay the hillsides were no longer golden, the inhabitants were few. We were approaching the Morvan, a granite country, the rocky divide between the broad waters of the Loire and the Saone, the north-going fork of the Rhone. The mountains piled up over 800 metres about us. Forests replaced the vines of the east-facing hills. Long distances intervened between simple foresters' villages. A ruined priory showed in a lonely valley far below us. Here and there on the sinuous road curves of the heights we came upon melting snow on the road and passed lumber carts drawn by oxen. One man was driving pigs, otherwise we had the road to ourselves. Approaching Autun the country grew poorer and shabbier with mines and slate quarries, with dumps and refuse corners, unusual things in France.

It was a pleasant surprise at Autun to turn in the courtyard of the old posting inn and find ranged around the yard shelter for the car, the bureau, the dining-room and the kitchen gleaming in copper

saucepans, with white-capped cooks busy with spits and spoons and little "spoil-sauces" white-capped too, attending upon the master cooks. Happy the inn where the kitchen is spread to sight in the old French custom.

As we ascended the steep city a distinguished-looking, old church dignitary in vivid purple gloves, a long black cloak and with green around his flat, beaver hat, gave us salutation upraising his astonishingly gloved right hand. Bishop, cardinal, pope's legate, Jesuit, we knew not. I never saw a purple hand except his at Autun.

Curiously mixed in time of building, ancient and late Renaissance and Gothic, with fine portals, the cathedral had an aisleless nave with a chill gathered under the vaulting which the sexton was seeking to change by opening the high western doors to let in the sun. Set about by a fountain Jean Goujon made for them and an old ducal palace long used by the church, yet the most impressive look of it all was from the plain below in the valley, where the spires lifted against a dark, snow-flurried hill and a green twilight sky. Autun had the long-recognized qualities of a paintable town: to have a river and to stand on a hill.

There is an old story of the visit of Francis I and Claude, his wife and Louise, his mother, to Autun. The ladies "did" the churches and Francis went down to the Roman gates. Porte d'Arroux

still arches the highroad, two great round arches for chariots or motors as the centuries bring them and two small ones for foot traffic, while across the top are seven slim arches with fine fluted pilasters.

The Roman gates of Autun, there is another but much restored one, held us as they did Francis I. Two white oxen entered with a load under the left arch. Set in squalor they preserve their distinction. We wandered about, astonished to see so many red-headed people, a rare color in France. Francis I wandered too, after his Roman gates and was lost in the woods and came to a tower where an old seigneur showed him the path back to Claude and Autun. The city rang its bells and burned torches for his return. A lost monarch wouldn't be an easy thing for a city to explain!

Autun and our inn had had other visitors. Napoleon and Josephine were here in their early ascendant. Their bedroom is preserved intact—improved, I thought, for every detail is exactly of the epoch. So anxious were the ladies of Autun to see them that they served as waitresses! After Elba Napoleon was here again. Autun did not want to see him then. It closed its shutters and was silent. No one cried *Vive l'Empereur.* It was in this same month, March, when he was here, and as we crossed the open court, gusty and cold, we thought of the Corsican in his greatcoat with his tragedy of the impossible before him—a disappointed presence which

we escaped on opening the door into the bright, warm dining-room.

There is always a new horizon for the onward looking but we did not look for it next morning until we had passed a Roman ruin in a riverside meadow, standing four-square eighty feet high, stark, strong in its wreck, with arched lines like eyebrows over its windows.

All the hens and the geese were out on the road. Their owners in the cottages were heavy-set folk with smiling faces. It was here we came to an American sign. "This route to Nevers suitable only for passenger cars and light loads, full of sharp curves and steep descents." After this sign, left from war days, we should know what was ahead! Nevertheless, it proved a fine road, sinuously climbing into high mountains where were forests for miles with oaks and beeches, some of which were monarchs. Higher were firs and finally larches. The sharp pointed trees seemed to grow on the crests matching the ridges in outline.

Ahead of us the backbone of the range lay squarely across the route to Nevers. From its fastnesses the rivers of France emerge to flow north, south and west. To the south, a four-headed mass of granite piled up above tree-clad slopes, dominating the way for miles. It was Mont Beuvray where Cæsar drew up before the Gauls in their rudely defended line.

Curves and hairpin turns, quick descents and long climbs brought us to Château-Chinon at the summit of its seven hundred metre hill—not to be confused in its site or its history with the château of Chinon on the Loire. This was the capital of the Morvan and had a gate and a ruined castle higher than the road, but still the village clung about the castle's base. Château-Chinon was a little town to which all roads climbed when we were looking for it and all roads slid away when we were through. The Nevers one serpentined ahead through highlands of cultivated fields. Repeatedly we saw six white oxen drawing a single plow.

All the way to Nevers it seemed a land of clean, happy living little touched by modernity. There were several manors with soft-hued tiled roofs and balanced wings, with fine oak trees and good gates, farmhouses now, but lovely in the landscape.

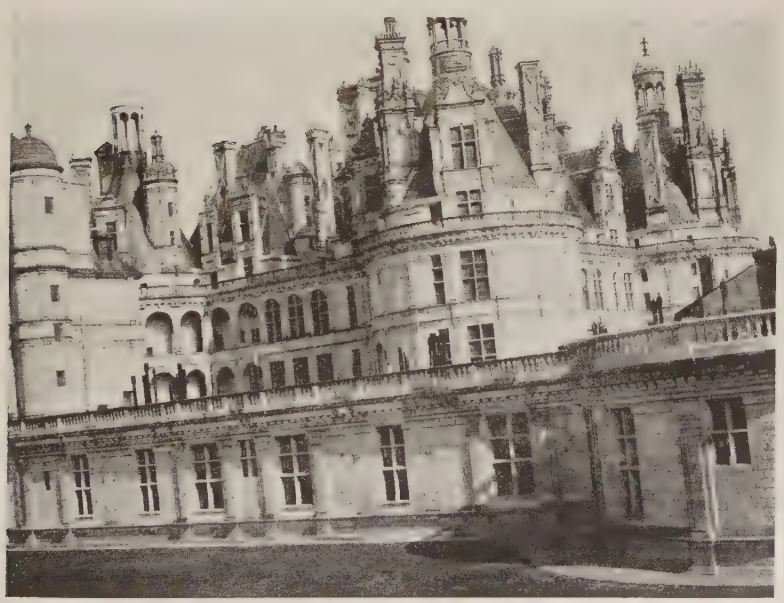
On one forest stretch high in the hills where the roadside trees were bearded in lichens, we came to a square stone tower in the woods, with a pyramid roof, mossy-green and overshadowed in the trees, the most romantic place on the journey. One room square, it rose in three stories. All alone, empty, it stood near nothing but beauty, a lodge in the wilderness. A mile or so from the tower we passed a man with a hooded falcon on his left wrist. We saw its huge grasping toes and feet. Poacher, survival or ghost, there he was on the forest road.

It was thus we came into the valley of the Nievre and saw thatched roofs on the cottages again. There were gleaming ponds in the lowlands; some were shadowy and reflected dark fir trees in their depths. All the buds were swelling. The woods seemed awakening. The mistletoe balls dotting the trees looked like balls of swarming bees. We looked far over the country through distant gaps and folds in the hills. The streams had primitive mills with overshot wheels, mossy and drippy, and fragrant sawdust piles. At each the thrifty workers lived near at hand.

We were now on the upper waters of the Loire; the land Daudet described in "La Belle Nivernaise," where his great-hearted bargee measured the trees and bargained his lumber in the woods. After a long descent we crossed a canal where to use Stevenson's phrase: "the most picturesque of things amphibious" were moving gently along. The canal barges had flowerpots at the cabin windows, children's heads at the companionway, the strong, blue stockinged mother at the rudder. The long tow-rope with the patient driver and horse far ahead was moving them all on into a daily changing scene.

In a little village with a stony narrow street called Chatillon we stopped to eat and found no inn, so were obliged to forage for brioche and fruit and cheese, to eat in the spring woods. Down the village came a solitary horseman in a velvet cap, with a long brass

THE SPIRAL STAIR AT NEVERS



THE HUNTING PALACE OF CHAMBORD

Louis XI at Bourges

Lallemont: a Courtyard in Bourges

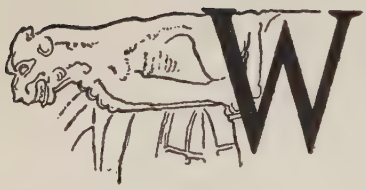
hunting horn double-wound under one arm and over the other shoulder. His chestnut horse was dappled in darker color and shone with grooming. Then followed all the fifty hounds, spotted brown and white, tails alert, with sensitive noses, intelligent eyes and all disdainful of the growls and bristling backs of the village watch-dogs. Two more huntsmen, coiled horns gleaming, brought up the pack. They lit up with color the grey village as they passed.

In climbing from the canal to the hilltop we found their château with oak gates and renovated stucco and great stables, the old village-owning château of other days, from which the men and hounds had come. A long park stretched beyond on the highway and we ate in solitude under a clematis bower in the shade of ivy-clad trees, in a centuries-old scene of cultivated nature.

Approaching Nevers a new landscape was around us. The roads had avenues of trees and thicket hedges. Horses were in the fields and little colts. We had seen no other pastured horses. The fences were wattled and the gates were made of oak splints and wooden pins. At a country crossroads, we saw an ox on wide leather slings, being shod with much contriving of pegs for his legs and their bending.

CHAPTER XXII

BERRY AND BLOIS



E entered clean, prosperous Nevers, old and romantic Nevers, which made a very mellow, complete appearance for a city of thirty thousand, on its bank above the wide Loire, a river we had not seen since November in Tours. A city of superb old gateways, fortified and pictorial, Nevers had a palace of its dukes, now thriftily the town hall, but still embellished on its long mullion-windowed façade with a distinguished central tower caging a spiral stair. This tall cylinder of stone was topped with a light cone of blue slate and a finial finely French. It had swans and eagles and the hunters' saints looking at each other on its panels for which Jean Goujon's master hand was responsible. The old ducal gardens where the Gonzagas of Urbino and the Mazarins of the Cardinal's family walked as ducal possessors, were now the small city's promenade where nursemaids and knitting dowagers spent their hours. Black pinafored school children were busy with outdoor calisthenics under a hand-clapping

master. In the mellow sunlight the old palace preserved its dignity and its beauty. The long graveled terrace stretched to a wall above the river with a peaceful view over the lowlands of the Loire. There were wistaria covered gazebos, where in a great feeling of peacefulness, the citizens "take the sun" delectably in the afternoon on seats "for talking age and whispering lovers made."

We stopped the car at the gilded gates of a Louis XV palace with Muses consciously posing after the fashion of that day. The bishop used to live there, but we did not have to imagine how a prelate would look in Louis Quinze quarters for the recent law had taken such palaces for the proletariat. His delicately paneled rooms housed a collection of old Nevers faience, a ware the Gonzagas began in the 1500's with workmen skilled in the luscious wares of Urbino. It was an example of masterly arrangement. The progression of the pottery went through royalty, loyalty, Franklin's visit, balloon discovery, Revolution, Freedom, the Directory, Napoleon and Restoration—*Ça ira!* So it goes. This pottery has not died out. Down by a town gate they were making it to-day and making it well, still with the Nevers' mark of the green knot.

As motorists we had keen appreciation of a blackboard in the garage, maintained by the local touring club, giving qualities of the routes about Nevers. We judged their opinions of the future by the imme-

diate past. It read: *Mediocre* to Autun; *Bonne* to Bourges and so it proved. Our route left town by pleasant ways with names to give delight, past the Street of Seven Prelates and Rue des Belles Lunettes. There were sundry fine gables and queer windows of bull's-eye glass, and several bridges spanning waterways and river.

When we passed a bourne—Bryant has almost removed that good word for a boundary stone from our language by connecting with "no traveler returns"—a bourne marked "Cher," the roads became perfect. There were many avenues bristling with trees and miles and miles of thicket forests where state forestry was going on. One woods had all its underbrush cut and bunched for miles, as precisely as a military maneuvre. Vast areas were in vistas that stretched away under the tall young trees left to grow to maturity. At one place the canal of Berry rose by locks and passed over a little river and again we saw the boating families that both travel and stay at home!

An aerodrome came next in sight and military fields as flat as a prairie but high-set. Regularly placed, systematically stenciled telephone poles marked "U. S. A." followed with us on the road many miles to Bourges. There were military signs on the level plain and places for target practice now being leveled ready to be plowed again. It was past an arsenal that we entered a modern end of Bourges.

At eleven in the morning the workers were flooding out upon the streets, on wheels and on foot, homeward bound for luncheon. We went on into the old part of the city, a very prosperous part, where a hotel, bowered in a budding rose vine, looked out upon a tiny *place* with a tinkling fountain.

It was now the second week in March and the weather was so spring-like that our windows stood open on the balconies. From the vantage point of these vine-covered grilles there was a view to right and left into the walled " courts of honor " on which two eighteenth-century mansions looked in quiet and retirement.

Bourges seemed a city of magnificence in town houses, but as if there was no magnificent living in any of them to-day. Jacques Cœur's house was very near us. It was set on the old town walls, so that from the lower level of the town it was towered and tremendously feudal. But from the high level it was a Gothic mansion of only two stories, with fantastic roofs. Its Gothic and canopied niches made a long stretch of stone façade on the street. Two servants carved in stone, looked right and left, down and up the street. Jacques Cœur may have meant them facetiously but he could not have foreseen that as master he would not walk beneath their gaze. His fortune was great. He controlled the trade with the Levant, he was Master of the Mint, he collected the taxes in Languedoc and loaned the

king money. Suddenly, just as this house neared completion, fortune turned. Some said he coined base metal, others that he had looked too long at Agnes Sorel, others that he poisoned her. Stripped of his riches, heavily fined, he escaped with his life and ate the bitter bread of banishment. Bourges saw him no more.

The interior we found to be a curious place, of great extent built about a courtyard. Its detail gave the idea that this man, bluntly called Jacques Cœur, was both boastful and self-made. His window panes had his galleons painted on them. A long hall called the Salle des Gardes had a ceiling like an inverted ship's hull. The chimney had three windows carved on it at which six people sat. One pair was he and his wife playing chess, in another they ate fruit. The house was full of jokes in stone. "A closed mouth catches no flies" and the like. One showed a king peeking from a wood at two lovers. Tristan and Yseult, floating little notes to each other on a stream, say some, but King Charles VII saw personal affront in it. Audacity and courage were in the motto which, heavily restored, looked from many walls. *"À vaillant coeur, riens impossible."*

Bourges had a monument to Louis XI. It combines the old theory of town monuments, with the new. He was the king and town-born son as well. The bronze shows Louis XI as a specious schemer and acquirer whose very toes grasp avariciously in

their soft and pointed shoes. It was made to stand a king before men.

There was great delight for us in another old town house where Cujus lived. It houses a collection rich in old household furnishings and brought Jacques Cœur nearer to us than his own house. Here we saw his effeminate, fat-faced portrait and his wife's with a headdress like a fall of linen from a clothes press—and the only pane left of his window glass on which in yellowish-green and black was pictured a bulging galleon in full sail.

Bourges was full of what etchers call "bits," richer than any city in France in proportion to its size. There was a beautiful timbered house called Reine Blanche—no one knows why. It may have been merely an inn name, but its garlanded lines, its carved oak saints and dancers and musicians gave us great delight. It was on the Rue des Toiles, the street that Meryon etched when his etchings sold for sous to buy bread.

Bourges had one of the cathedrals that looked like a great ship moored in the little city. Its five portals in a row were in magnificent arches of receding lines of saintly figures carved in beauty. Each portal opened on an aisle or the nave. The five doors and five great paths sweeping up to the altar put the cathedral on the grand scale.

The "plains of Berry" were before us. The levels offered a marked change from the mountains

of the Morvan that we had just crossed. In every view there was the feeling of great extent. Many of the fields were just being put back into crops. Bags of seed stood evenly placed across the plowed land. Men passed slowly down the field, sowing from bags around the waist, with the gesture of the sower, that motion of the arm as old as Time.

Vierzon was on our path, a drawn-out town where farm implements and pottery were made. Stevenson said of such a place: "it was handsomely enough diversified with factory chimneys." A watercourse forced the small houses very close to the road. Evidently there were no inside stairs, for we counted forty ladders, along the street, leading up to the lofts. Some of the ladders were chained. All were made to be there all the time. It saved room inside. We wished we could see them going up to bed!

Out in the open road we passed stone cottages with stone steps built up the outside for entering the lofts. The twittering tailed ducks had ladders set for them to come up from the stream.

We were now in a great stretch of poor country, a plain with a peasant landscape, called the Salogne. This swale had a curious grey soil, as if peat or coal had nearly formed. Once it was the great swamp that turned Cæsar back. Now it is drained and its thin soil used for pasturage and farm lands. Shepherdesses were out in the fields with their sheep, forty feeding as one. It was the country pictured

in Marie-Claire, the story of recent years of the gentle orphan of the convent, bound out on a solitary farm. Phrases of the story came to mind as we saw the realities in passing: the waterholes where the lambs were drowned; the scant forage, so the sheep had to be pastured even when the snow froze on Marie-Claire's eyelids; the wolves from the deep woods; the bench by the door on which they sat in the summery twilight. The spell of fiction had made the simplicity and hardships so real we recognized them.

We were approaching a place that piqued the curiosity of the "Beloved Vagabond"—its rolling syllables made Locke's hero want to go there! Romorantin! It is one of those places always looking at the traveler from the map and seductively saying "come." Romantic Romorantin lies in behind Amboise and Chenonceaux and Chambord. Monarchs were always galloping over there through royal forests. Francis I spent his boyhood there.

We came in from the southeast to find a sweet river-side, water-set town with a whole street of fifteenth-century houses timbered and curiously carved and a Renaissance manor on the river-level, looking out in sunny quiet upon a water-catching device in the river.

They never have visitors in Romorantin and no one ever looks at the old houses, we were told, but a young girl was sent by her father to show us where

the antiquaries were sure Francis I had lived. Its age and criss-crossed timbers were reassuring and we stood on the bridge and looked at the beauty. Not an ugly thing was to be seen yet all was used. Even a cloth factory nestled by the water but was screened from aggression by a wooded islet.

A town of Francises this, Francis II in his short year of boyish reign did a queer thing here. He issued the Edict of Romorantin giving liberty of conscience to the Protestants, but died leaving his fair Marie Stuart and the world of murders and massacres.

Just as we were leaving, a young man peered at our running gear, reading our American license. He was from our state, a left-behind from the war, lonely for home.

The highway led to Blois, through a country still a plain, with woods and pools and widespread wheat fields. Spring had come and all the sunny corners were waking into flowers. The very earth smelt sweet; and so we came into the village of Cours-Cheverny beside a wooded park. Its white château sat low facing a grassy avenue six kilometres long.

We went far down on the long grass for the view, treading on pale green and yellow primroses nestling in the turf. The house was of the early 1600's, its long two-story front set with bas-relief discs, ended in two balanced pavilions, a story higher. All the interior was strangely bright and well preserved,

King's chamber, great fireplaces and a whole room of joyous, painted panels of Don Quixote. Restoration at Cheverny had not overstepped up-keep.

Soon we came to the Loire, its long arched stone bridge and Blois at the bridge-end. We were again on a beaten track and dined with tourists reading guide-books with their coffee, and went through the streets with young architects who pulled their tripods like swords from the scabbards of old.

There were hillsides scaled by stone stairs in Blois and several encircling ways by which a familiarity with the town as well as the entrance to the château were attained. Louis XII on horseback was niched in Gothic glory overhead, in a wall of brick diagonally bediamonded in purple-black. There was so much silvery stone in quoins and windows, in lacy balconies, in the often placed fretted porcupine of Louis XII's emblem, that, with the old slates of the roof, this approach is a memory in color, of soft purple, dim rose and silvery white. It was a gate into the life of the Valois, into the glories and exuberances of the French Renaissance. On one side was the wing of Francis I, beautiful, exquisite, superlative as it stood there in the spring sunshine of Touraine. Each window was framed in intricate carving blazoned with his crowned salamander. Following a custom of the time (we climbed eight such in all) the grand staircase rose outside but against the building, and stood in the courtyard.

Blois led all in the beauty of its spiral cylinder of stone rising to the roof. It was carved without and within in a glory of good taste and clearly thought design.

No one knows who built this supreme staircase of the world. But no one could have done it but a master. It winds to the left. The tradition of France has always kept to the right in stairs and traffic. Francis I, after trying long, brought a great man into Touraine when this stair was built; a man interested in mechanical devices as can be seen in his note-books in Milan to-day. And he was left-handed! Leonardo da Vinci lived at Amboise—his house is still there.

Catherine de Medici, mother of three Valois kings, lived long here and died. The picture of life seemed to centre about her and her paneled room, small and tawny in color, touched with gold. Secret panels open at a touch. They opened at her touch and she had many secrets. Marie Stuart played on the staircase. Montaigne, the king's gentleman-in-ordinary, walked in the courtyard talking with DeThou and wishing he were home at his desk and free from courtier knee-bending. Marguerite de Valois walked in churchly processions in cloth of gold. The Duc de Guise, dressed in grey satin and eating prunes from his comfit box, was stabbed to death in Henry III's sight. So vividly had history been lived here that we were in accord

with Guizot: "If one wants romance he must read history."

What though the paint has been made too bright, the gold too fresh? As a white-washed barracks something had to be done and the French ideal for a century has been to make the old new.

The next morning found us bound for Chambord, sixteen kilometres east and outside the bounds of Touraine.

The ragged royal forest of Chambord is owned by an absentee. The republic of France did not permit the Duc de Chambord nor does not now permit the Duc de Parme to come here. The park is surrounded by a stone wall thirty-two kilometres long. The château lay far in. Chambord stood before us, the largest of the châteaux of the Loire, so large—it has four hundred bare rooms—its roof was a city of towers and lanterns; its centre a great set of four round rooms, story above story; in the heart a great stone stair. Chambord was built by Francis I for a hunting palace. The hunting, mostly for wild boars, was to be done inside the park walls. The embellished roof was meant for a court promenade, a high-set belvedere, from which the royal hunt could be watched—the most stately pleasure dome ever decreed. At right and left were lower wings for intimate living, with Francis I's window garnished with stone cupids, and his son Henry II's emblem, an H interlaced with Dian de Poitier's slender cres-

cent of the hunting goddess, which became a plain letter "C" if it had to be explained to Henry's wife, Catherine de Medici.

Brantôme tells how Francis cut with a diamond on the supper room window a line well remembered in France: *Souvent femme varie*—written in his long, slim letters. It was there when Louis XIV brought his court and Molière played first the *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.* Louis and the ladies looked at Francis' opinion on the glass. Louis put his cane through the little pane to refute the variable quality of women and the ladies thought him far more gallant than Francis.

The core of the whole château, originally open to the winds, was a spiral stone stair wide enough for the whole court to ascend with ease to the roof. We ascended this stair knowing its secret, watching for it, but it did not show. We descended the spiral staircase—but not on the spiral we went up! In this cylinder of stone, two paths or sets of steps ascended, one over the other. Both started and ended on the same floor and same roof but at opposite sides of the cylinder. Thus unseen, one could ascend and another descend the same stair. Kings played with stairs in the valley of the Loire but Francis I's dream palace was the winning one.

Like Lippomano, the Venetian Ambassador, who wrote home that the piles cost 300,000 francs and that the roof was gilded, "We left thunderstruck."

Chaumont on the Loire

Chenonceaux Arching the Cher

A Rock Dwelling of Touraine

Feudal Towers of Luynes

On the shabby, romantic avenue, where the spring flowers were white and pale, no one passed, no one stirred. It almost seemed we could hear the buds swelling in the trees. The Loire shimmered in its shallows in the hot spring sun. There were weirs in the river with fishermen tending them in skiffs almost like gondolas, the very skiffs of Corot's pictures. The road by the river was worn from war, but intrinsically solid from four centuries of making.

At Chaumont we had coffee outdoors in a trellised garden and bespoke, too, a little care for our things in the car, for it was not permitted to drive into the grounds and Chaumont sat far up the wooded bank, tree-shaded above the riverside houses. With dusky cedars of Lebanon, Chaumont had a superb setting over the river. Its round and pointed fortress towers were on the very brink. By a *pont-levis* that still could be raised, we entered the courtyard, with the château on three sides and the fourth open to the Loire with its beauty in sight for miles. In the private chapel, suspended by a string, was the flat, flappy red hat of Cardinal Charles D'Amboise, the château-builder. There were bedchambers of Catherine de Medici with legendary-looking bed and antique dressing table and of Dian, too, within lusciously hung walls of tapestry. There were towers where Ruggieri and Catherine cast horoscopes from the stars.

Here came Franklin and Nini modeled him, with

and without the great spectacles, forerunner of those of to-day, and in his round fur cap and the scant locks of old age. We took away with us a memory of Catherine's portrait, pale-faced and black-veiled, with a point over her forehead; of Dian's long classic nose from Jean Goujon's medallion; and of the sagacious face of "Franklin Americain"; a strange juxtaposition of the famous and infamous for quiet Chaumont to offer a traveler.

As we crossed the drawbridge, we met three hesitant gypsy girls, oily-haired, rough, itinerant rabbit-skin buyers. "How much do they take from us to go in?" We told them two francs. They were ready for that. "Is the dog *méchant?*" We told them he had not bothered us—and the three nomads went under the portcullis to gaze on the chambers of queens.

The road took us along the Loire side through a few villages necessarily long and narrow because they were between water and hill. In no time we were in Amboise and parked our motor under the walls of that perched castle under some clipped trees. It would have been fine traveling for us to have gone up the spiral incline ramp in the great corner tower of Amboise. It was the one the "Lightning Conductor" went up—in the story only,—when motor cars were young. The towers have been sealed at the bottom for uncounted years and we climbed to the high-set terrace by an outdoor road after it was

duly impressed upon us at the gate, that this was not a *monument historique* but privately owned. Amboise belongs to the Orléans family and is the seat from which Louis Philippe's inheritor would rise and make his bow, should the political wind blow that way in France.

Tiny St. Hubert's chapel sat like a stone jewel box on the parapet. It was much restored but there the hounds were always blessed before the royal hunts. Bare were the rooms and halls where ambitious Anne de Bretagne and Charles VIII lived and where Marie Stuart and Francis II, a youthful pair, held their court and saw treachery and massacres from the balconies. Eighty-seven thousand pounds of furnishings did Charles VIII send home from Italy up the river to Lyon and on by carts to this château of Amboise. All he had seen of beauty in Flanders, Italy and France he wanted for Amboise. He could ride up his towers on horseback. His father, Louis XI, whom men called "the universal spider" was dead. He wanted to play tennis and be happy—but he knocked his forehead on a low doorway, a terrible warning to people who build low doors!—and was gone from the sunny world of perched châteaux at twenty-eight.

Before leaving Amboise we ran back from the Loire a mile or so to see the brick manor house where Leonardo da Vinci died far from home, but royally done in Francis I's own arms. Our experience was

like Victor Hugo's when he visited Lamartine. He expected "bushy ivy and stones tinted by the hand of Time." Lamartine had had rheumatism and had cleaned out all the old. The tints of Time had made him melancholy. Everything was painted yellow. Leonardo's house had been scoured and renovated so that its four hundred years were as a day.

The town hall attic to which we climbed behind a pair of blackened sabots and purple yarn stockings on the woman in charge, had an immense quantity of documents shown delightfully. We essayed to read Leonardo's will; he left his clothes with kind words to his pupil. He did not have gold to give. There were the long scratchy names of one royal Louis after another and *François* written with an air and Dian's thin quill marks. These all brought subjects and monarchs into reality before us, and we proceeded down the river they all loved, westward into the sunset toward the twin spires of Tours.

CHAPTER XXIII

INTO PARIS

HE quiet inn of the Croissant welcomed us at Tours and the protected location under the glass in the courtyard was held for our car. We had been three thousand miles on the roads of France since Thanksgiving day when we were there before. Spring had come. Grey skies were gone. Magnolias shone over garden walls and the anglers so important in the river scenery were again "soaking an indefinite bait in the large indifferent stream."

It was a Sunday and all Tours, more, all Touraine, went out to walk, and mildly and loiteringly got themselves out on the great bridge to enjoy the sunshine and look at the peaceful river of a thousand memories to a Tourangeau. Perhaps one reason they so love their country is, from youth to old age, they get so much peaceful joy out of looking at the hills and rivers.

We crossed the Loire and went out through the gates, with their two uniformed watchers. Every city is so guarded and incoming produce taxed, but formalities have been only an exchange of salutations and the officers have always been ready to

identify thoroughfares for us. The sun was hot as we went down the levée. Men were out in their dooryards spading the garden patches and raking up as every garden lover does on the first warm day of spring. Potatoes were set on the window sills to sprout and hurry the season. Artichokes were hilled up for activity and glass bells, *cloches,* were gleaming in the beds sheltering the prized "melons of Langeais" and early vegetables, their *premiers.* We passed a few cars out for pleasure runs with father and son on the front seat; even if the son were only a year old he sat with his father! Here and there were ferry ends and houses that Balzac wrote of; it was all his countryside.

We turned into the village of Luynes, ancient and orderly with a timbered market and a long twelfth-century flight of stone steps to the gaunt and romantic towers of Luynes, facing south over the valley. Four cylinders of stone, topped like candle extinguishers, rose from an ivy-covered cliff. Wallflowers tufted in brilliance from every crevice. The walls had stones projecting from their surface giving them a feudal, fighting look. It was the very sort of a fortress-château that passed out of fashion at the Renaissance, when the nobility began to want large windows and did not want to be immured. A dusty shabbiness had fallen on it. Only an old gardener and his wife were there and we wandered among their flowers. They were distrait and talked

in whispers and watched like warders of old to see if someone were coming up the hill. "Does the owner ever come here?" we said quite by chance, as we left them. We saw they were in trouble. *"Le duc est mort."* He had died in Paris that morning.

We went down the hillside on a twisty footpath past one house after another clawed out of the rock; troglodytes have lived there for centuries and are still there. Flowers grew on their walls. A bird in a wicker cage sang by the door. A sunny-faced child peered out. Grandsire basked in the sun, just as his rude forefathers had crept out of the rock under the castle towers and enjoyed the spring sun for centuries. All Touraine had a permanent look, a living as fixed as of shellfish attached to a rock. The family group in a garden house at the fine terrace end, the spading villagers, the bare-kneed youths, the old grandames at their doors, looked lasting.

Langeais was not far on down the river with a somewhat shabby town about it. It had a château in the midst of things; streets, shops and small business were under its towers and close to its drawbridge. It was a Sunday afternoon excursion for the French this spring day. We had to wait our turn to go through and beguiled the time with tea in a house of Rabelais.

A great tramping and rumbling were heard on the chemin de ronde, the warder's walk in the parapets, as if the guard were being changed in centuries long

gone. It was the tramp of the tourists behind their guide.

Langeais had been restored in the picturesque manner, twenty years ago. Vellum-clad volumes rested on sombre oak tables; the beds were hung with correct velvet; the flambeaux were in place; the mistletoe hung on the castle wall; there were jars full of teazles in rooms Anne de Bretagne would be at home in. The period was everywhere preserved.

This was where Anne de Bretagne was married to Charles VIII with all her marriage coffers of linen, her dower of Brittany, safeguarded by her contract to marry the next heir if the king should die without a son—which she did! Langeais was borrowed for the wedding, for Anne's guardians did not want to go to the bridegroom's château and he as king did not go to Brittany. It disturbed the owner, Dunois, who rode hard into Tours to buy wedding provisions —and died on the way back from his speed.

Cinq Mars' stiff tower by the river, a Roman aqueduct on the hills, a manor in a walled garden with Francis I's salamander on its window frames were ours to see and then Tours again in the soft spring twilight with the bells of St. Gatien booming deep-throated over the old city.

Aeroplanes were humming over Charlemagne's tower in the morning as we set out leisurely to go to Villandry for the number and beauty of the châteaux of Touraine is something to marvel at. It

sat beneath the hills, three-sided on a stone courtyard, very open to view but fended from the road by stone-set watercourses. It rose, a lived-in place of beauty—better a gardened-in one. Parterres of clipped box extended behind Villandry to the hill, intricate areas of Gothic patterns in green. Swans floated in the waterways. Arched orangeries and balustraded walks led along the hillsides. Spring and a poetic beauty hung over the long formal gardens.

Everywhere on the Loire the setting of the lords and the peasants was the same. Holes in the rock, and bare, plain, low-set cottages for one class; unlimited extravagance, vast wings and towers and galleries for the other; and little between. The peasants have had a century's chance now to better themselves, the aristocracy have almost vanished. Some of these great mansions have been given to the state, Langeais and Azay, two are held by lost-cause heirs, Chambord and Amboise, but Chenonceaux left by us as a farewell to Touraine, a *bonne bouche,* had had a history of many sales to wealthy owners since the days when Catherine de Medici demanded its keys from Dian.

We went by Veretz, on the south bank of the Cher so that we should come on Chenonceaux and have first sight of it spanning the river.

There the mellow, soft-yellow château sat on five arches across the broad tranquil Cher—a river

chosen for its gentle quiet and its reflections. Chenonceaux was not built on the banks—but as a caprice, completely on the river so that each end, the only entrances, were reached by drawbridges. The long gallery across the Cher was two storied and the proportions of it made three equal parts, of bridge-like arches above the river, of two stories of windows and outcurving wall over the abutments, and of the long slate roof with low-eaved dormers.

Chenonceaux was lost to sight as we crossed and returned on the other bank to the long-avenued entrance. Francis I acquired it by covetousness and called it *beau et plaisant pays.* His son gave it at once, on becoming Henry II, to Dian de Poitiers. Her charms for him were great though her daughters were his age. It was the favorite's favorite place. She began the distinctive gallery across the Cher; then a tilting lance went in his helmet. While he still breathed Catherine demanded the keys. Dian had a firm title to Chenonceaux but when the summons came, she gave up and Catherine built in her stead. Her son Francis II and Marie Stuart spent their honeymoon in its beauty. Louise, the widow of Henry III, lived for years alone, with black-hung rooms and one miniature over the fireplace. Even George Sand had associations here, for her great-grandfather being the tax-gatherer, lived here in riches and plenty and held, or Mme. Dupin did, a sort of literary country-seat

THE BACK-DOORS OF VENDÔME

ENTERING THE WATER-GATE OF VENDÔME

Parapets of Langeais

The Water-set Château of Maintenon

where Voltaire lived for years. Her pink and comfortable portrait shows her as she lived on tranquilly through the Revolution.

As we entered the door whose keys seemed to make it Dian's we had choice of many occupants. The rooms possessed the quality of intimacy for, excepting the long gallery with its wavering river lights, they were of possible, usable size. Emblazoned chimneypieces rose in gold and blue to the ceilings. Portraits and old tapestry helped the effect—but auctions and many changes have not left that deep charm that goes with unbroken ownership.

Our days in France had been like Howard Pyle drawings, in each always a road went off somewhere. They had their dawn and dusk on new horizons. It was thus we left Tours of which Evelyn said: "No city in France exceeds it in delight."

We ascended the low hills to the northeast where unfenced fields, cultivated to the margin of the road, formed grain fields as far as the eye could see. A ruined tower on a hill, a woods or two and the long, sinuous, house-set hill of Châteaurenault, brought us to a little river city, Vendôme, with a water-gate set across the bridge-end, like a pleasant two-story house very solidly set across the bridge. The watercourse was a line of back doors and back yards, but formed a pretty scene: there were tile-roofed sheds open to the water, garden walls hanging with Virginia creeper—they make the name into *vigne vierge*—

places to sit and places to wash, and shadowy water, clear and clean.

Vague old walls much betowered, majestic in ruin, frown down on Vendôme. They are town-owned now and children play there, so that the stronghold makes one think of a lion with its teeth gone. Jeanne D'Albret lived in the perched castle and her son handed it on to a son of his, a great fighter in his day.

We drew up on a square of flat-clipped trees. There is always a hero. It was Rochambeau!—he had been in our state and had marched an army from Newport to Yorktown. Not many Americans look up at him in the quiet of Vendôme. In life, he was lord of the château of Rochambeau, his near-by birthplace.

There were unostentatious cloisters now housing grain sacks and a green-grey flamboyant church, La Trinité, so beautiful Ruskin held it a proof of fearlessness in a living architecture.

The spring sun was tempered by a wind blowing over the plateau that is called the granary of France. Strong, fine horses, their fat flanks groomed and polished until radiant dapples shone on them, passed us. Their tails were braided and each horse was docilely tied to the tail of the horse ahead. *Forêts* were patched on the landscape, just what we would call wood-lots at home. We descended the slopes of land to that river Loir incredibly named to be a

neighbor of the one ending in "e." Châteaudun had its feudal château off in a field, a great rectangular mass, home of Dunois who championed Jeanne d'Arc and shared her military honors in taking Orléans. It was the only town in the eighty kilometre run from Vendôme to Chartres. Sharpshooters held Châteaudun against the enemy for half a day in 1871. It was burned to the ground in the other half of the day.

Over the long bare wheat fields aeroplanes practiced. Their sheds usurped the wheat's place on the fields nearest Chartres. The great cathedral towers stood up against the sky and by dark we had the car in the coach-shed and were climbing over plaster and mortar into a hotel being extended for future trade.

It was a brilliant moonlight night, intensely so, with black-shadowed canyons of narrow streets. At Chartres, Scott's advice about Melrose holds, for seeing its exquisite Gothic "aright." The great transept doorway and the "finest spire in Europe" were at their loveliest in the brilliant moonlight. The smallness of the neighboring buildings, the detached position of the cathedral in a paved square, gave it overwhelming mass and majesty. All about was a desert of shadowy stone. The town was dark and asleep by nine. At midnight we were awakened—the noise kept on until dawn ——. Every aeroplane was out for night practice over the roofs of Chartres,

dipping and roaring, pouncing and purring around the fair and famous spires.

Chartres was always the Virgin's cathedral. Henry Adams has called attention to the extreme quality of worship the Virgin was given in France. Queer lines on the floor were for penitential crawlings. Henry III and Louise his wife walked, year after year, in penitential procession from Paris here to Chartres. It overcomes by its grandeur, its height, its beauty and by its color. Its high clerestory windows, its great rose windows were blue like sapphires, like the blue of the heavens on a brilliant night. The blue windows of Chartres were so much finer than on a previous visit that we wondered if it could be the spring sunlight and learned that all the glass had been taken down in wartime—an impossibly difficult thing it would seem—and was newly up again, thoroughly cleaned. It could be seen in its glory for the light could now get through.

A great Renaissance screen of forty scenes from the New Testament surrounded the choir facing a long path around the chapels. So vast was the cathedral that this troop of life-size figures, hundreds of them, seemed but a detail lost in the majesty of the great cathedral of France. Such an impress did it make that minor buildings did not seem worth while, but on leaving the hotel which we rather suspected was Lowell's "pea-green inn," we had a prowl in the car through some tortuous streets and alleys

where carved, cross-timbered façades were propped and buttressed into a few more years to add to their five hundred, before they crumple and crumble to the earth. Then we left by a town gate and a stagnant moat that demonstrated fully why most moats have been filled in!

In a few miles we were in a wooded country of simplicity and rusticity. The houses were low and picturesque. Their sides were made of clay, piled and plastered into height and then cut sharply into walls. The thatched roofs overhung very far so that rain did not wear them away. The very walls of the farmyards were of eight foot mud as neatly made as of brick and were thatched fore and aft in pictorial and rain-shedding form. The thatch had iris growing in the straw on roof-crests and barns. There was a quaintness about the whole countryside. A carter came toward us in a rustic blouse and heavy wooden shoes. The dappled horse followed him, keeping its nose in a caress on his shoulder. The man's shoes left an impress on the loose dust of the road like marks of waffle irons.

We saw a small village at our right marked Jouy on the map. What more natural than in such a rural, charming landscape they should have made the early printed cottons we know as *toile de Jouy!* We went over to see. Maybe we could unearth the factory and see some hand-blocks. The village was picturesque. We saw a *facteur* in uniform starting

out from the post-office with his black wooden box hung from his shoulder and open before him. He looked the kind to know.

"Was *toile de Jouy* made here in years gone by?" we asked. *"Jamais! Jamais!"* He became very vehement. He, his mother, his grandmother and his *arrière* I-could-not-make-out-whats, had lived and died here. Never had *toile de Jouy* been made here! Never. He summoned the mayor to assist him in backing his statement.

"The houses and the village are so charming," we said, "it all looks like *toile de Jouy.*"

"People have come here before and asked me," said the mayor. "Toile de Jouy is very valuable now—but"—and we left these men of firm opinions on prints and chintz being mixed with the name of their village.

The country became more park-like in character, with flowery ravines and woodsy hillsides. For miles we were separated from this woods and the great trees by moss-covered park walls and a deep ditch with water in it—a favorite French means of keeping intruders out! Across our path and through the park rose high stone arches. They were very ruinous but still curved as much as seventy feet over our heads. The aqueduct seemed to stretch away for miles but the ditch and wall made the park inaccessible to exploration on our part. It was the ruin of Louis XIV's folly, his attempted water sys-

tem to carry the River Eure to waterless Versailles. It is a monument to the human toil of 30,000 men for four years. They died in such shocking numbers the king at last gave it up.

We met an old woman sitting on a mound among the cowslips. She had a most antagonistic view toward all château-dwellers and wanted us to view a great villainy, then going on in the park. A few workmen were burning some brush, a much needed clearing up under the trees. It seemed a very innocent occupation and we began to think château-dwelling had its drawbacks when the state decrees visitors shall be allowed a generous number of hours a week and the peasants call down maledictions when a spring bonfire is made out of their perquisites. It was the first and only brush fire we had seen.

This estate was bought by Madame Scarron and Louis XIV gave her its title of Maintenon. The house was in view from the park wall and then lost as we entered the village of Maintenon where we found ourselves facing the other end of a great mansion of the days of Francis I, suggestive of Chenonceaux but ruddier in color, sitting in water basins, and reflected from turret to foundation stone down the long side of the château.

There was an immense area of paved forecourt and stables of incredible size. The court used to visit in Louis XIV's day with six thousand guests. All was now very much locked up and unused. This

became the property and is still—of the de Noailles, by marriage with Mme. de Maintenon's niece. This family had three members who did much for America. One was Lafayette's young wife and the others those two young brothers-in-law of his, the Viscomte de Noailles who marched on foot, to give an example of endurance, with his troops, from Newport to the Hudson, and his brother, who was at Yorktown in 1782.

We stopped at Rambouillet where a hotel overlooked the state gardens and park and yet faced on the busy small-town street. It would have been possible to reach Paris but not before dark. It was an agreeable hotel with pleasant chintz and waxed floors and green tables for tea on a graveled terrace looking out on the green allées. Rambouillet is a national domain. The President of France comes often to the château with friends, to rest, and it is kept in readiness for him. It was rather a plain, dull place after the brilliant glories of the Loire. Francis I died here but in the others he lived.

The water plan of Rambouillet was very elaborate and very beautiful, formed like a six-spoked fan, spread before the long, stone terrace of the château. Quiet old abbés were walking in the leafy paths intent on their breviaries. Ducks played and dipped and twiddled their tails in convoys. Some crows were in dark pine trees and were worrying the ducks who must have had eggs in the rushes. Swans came

up to us on the water steps leading to the stone terraces.

We were off early in the morning past a large military school and on the best and smoothest road we had yet driven. It was black and sinuous like a parkway, the road the President uses from Paris. It was possible to skim along in the forenoon at a good pace—slowing only at villages where were the rough blocks of eighteenth-century pavements.

At Versailles we drove up to the grilles and looked in both on the side of the Place d'Armes and around on the quarter-mile garden façade. It seemed truly the culmination of all the extravagant building of the centuries in France. The French had toiled in sincerity to rear their cathedrals, then their fortress châteaux, then in sixty years of the 1500's they had built twenty-four great Renaissance palaces and innumerable small châteaux in the provinces. Again fashion and custom veered. These châteaux through France were deserted as the fortresses had already been, for Louis XIV built Versailles and summoned his courtiers. Ten thousand dwelt under the roofs of his palace.

We went into Paris through Ville d'Avray, still bosky and lovely in glimpses, as when Corot painted there. We passed avenues radiating from starry centres back of St. Cloud, then long stretches of villas and workaday suburbs. By the bridge at Suresnes and the gates of the Bois we entered the city.

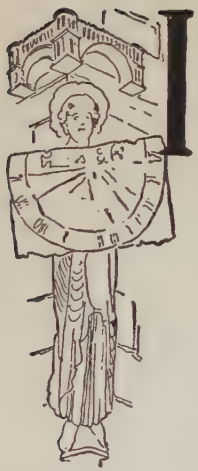
The octroi men measured our gasoline and we drew to one side and paid a very small tax per litre on what happened to be in the tank. They were puzzled that we did not have a claim for a rebate and asked us how much we had when we left Paris. We told them we had not yet been in Paris—but Cherbourg as a starting place was difficult for them to understand.

The Bois was a delicate, pale green. Daffodils showed in the meadow-edges. The birds were singing. The sun was bright. The white stone of Paris seemed dazzling and fair. Traffic was light in the Bois at this morning hour; it was a little heavier on the Avenue de Bois de Boulogne. At the Arc de Triomphe it was very much of the darting order, taxis flitting and flashing everywhere. Not knowing the special traffic regulations of Paris beyond the legal necessity of a tootable French horn, but knowing our way well, we left the Champs-Elysées route and slipped off toward the river in the direction of the Trocadero. We crossed the Seine and threaded the Boulevard St. Germain and the Raspail to the pleasant flower-set courtyard of the Woman's University Club.

Our plan was to make a short stay in Paris, get our steamer reservations and resume our journey northward through Normandy in the full beauty of apple-blossom time.

CHAPTER XXIV

THROUGH NORMANDY



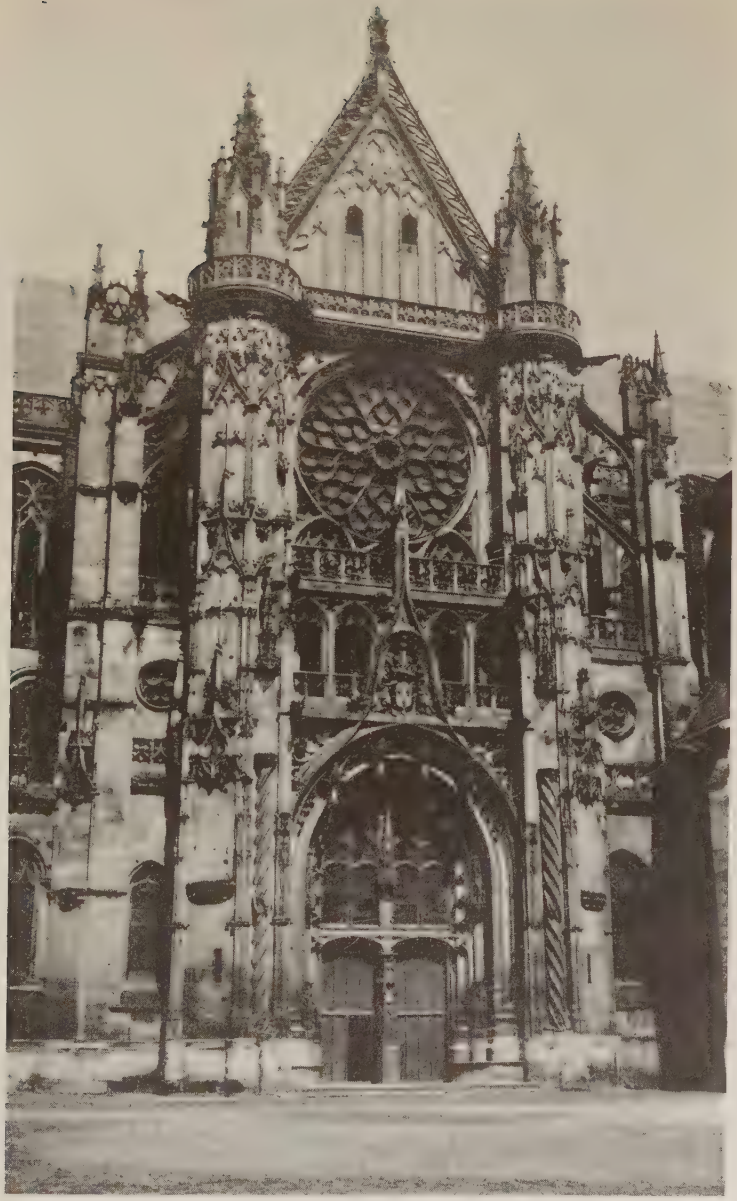
IT seemed as if ten days were a safe allotment of time to explore Normandy *en route* to Cherbourg and to allow the twenty-four hours which the steamship company asked so that the car should be released from the custom house and placed on the tender.

It was the middle of April when we left Paris at its loveliest, with the pale green of horse-chestnut trees set with their white-torched blossoms over the Champs-Elysées. The Tuileries gardens remained a wistful memory of beauty with their fair spring setting of hyacinths in their parterres. We went out by the Porte Villette, reached by circling the boulevards past the site of the Bastille. Our farewell scene was the *Jambon Foire* where every conceivable article of junk was piled for a mile on the sidewalks. Intermingled were antiques, broken modernities, brass, glass, iron, pewter, old books, old shoes. A vender hoped for a purchaser in each searcher he faced across the low-spread heaps. We cruised slowly and attentively along the curb and would have stopped had there been an outstanding

opportunity of purchase but we already had an old silver salver hung in the shelter of the spare tire, sundry linen-pattern panels under the seat and not another inch of space to spare.

Funerals of the poor were creeping toward the gates of Paris with doleful queues of two-by-two mourners. We crossed a canal of the Marne and saw a flotilla of these boats that combine yachting, driving and domesticity. Here was the scene of Daudet's story of the child of the Paris streets that the bargee brought home to his wife and his boat.

We passed the octroi gates of the city and a long bare manufacturing suburb. It was well to see quarters of Paris, mile after mile, like this exit of Villette, to understand it is not all like the Place Vendôme. With little intermediate, we were soon in green wheat fields growing without a foreground to our wheelsides. Soon there were black-boled trees beside the road, breaking into tender green. Our old road companions, the paired magpies, were flashing their black and white in flight. The first village seemed pocketed in obscurity on a hillside but had its inevitable park and grand living on the crest. Then came the great trees of the Forest of Chantilly, where blue scyllas spread like a cerulean carpet, far away. As miles of forest passed our eyes there were places where anemones were like snowflakes on the vivid turf, and where daffodils grew wild, in Wordsworthian quantities. Mme. de



THE MELLOW PORTAL OF SENLIS

Cone Towers in Old Beauvais

Pierrefonds

Sévigné tells of the court going out to luncheon on tables spread under park trees where the jonquils were growing like a yellow carpet far and wide. It made us think of mild American efforts to naturalize these bulbs in our woods.

We passed two English lovers on horseback at a carrefour in the forest and a girl with a wheel and an officer with a saddle-horse, walking the flowery forest paths together. An old woman had tied tight cones of jonquils, each with a snift of green in the centre, up and down a long staff and was thus carrying them, a heavy load, to market. Faggot gatherers were trudging by with loads on their backs. Thus, we came to Senlis before noon to find an inn of the same high quality as Rambouillet, a little sophisticated from being within Parisian reach. All Senlis was a contrast, very, very old and very new, for one long street was a replacement after war.

Senlis lay on the old paved road from Paris to Flanders. It had a sort of Three-Musketeers flavor in its byways. We visited a garden-set ruin where primroses grew and yews were high and clipped. Plums and pears were espaliered on the walls of half ruinous timber halls where Henry IV had stayed. From vantage points in the garden we could see the cathedral's old front with its tall spire and long lance-shaped windows. All this front and the mellow side portal were in blossom to the highest gargoyle mouth with tufts of deep yellow wall-flowers.

The very steeple was sown with yellow glory from wind-blown seed. Within, the statues were transparently veiled in purple gauze, for Holy Week.

We purposed to visit Pierrefonds and went across wheat fields, flat as far as the eye could see. After all we let the French give us the name of *prairie.*

Crepy-en-Valois, a kingly name, was a little agricultural centre with great ornate stone pillars at its entrance. Primitive ox-carts were in its streets and in its outskirts the haystacks, round and thriftily thatched on their low cone tops, looked strangely familiar, for they have all been pictured many times from many brushes.

We wondered how the fortress of Pierrefonds was going to sit, picturing it as in a forest, on a rock, above a river. The forest was not there and it rose above tightly-set village roofs. We entered on foot at a sheet iron gate, to circle under precipitous walls to the portcullis and more sheet iron. Everything was as new as a railway station. The entry was beside a new donjon keep into a new courtyard. Great chapels and staircase, walls and walks, towers and turrets, all cold and hard and new, were exactly like our type of fortress savings banks of the 1890's.

It was all a fantasy of medieval arrogance dreamed by Viollet-le-Duc, who was given carte blanche by Napoleon III to reconstruct his acquired feudal stronghold and go the limit of imagination as to what might have been. The old saying about the saddest

word of tongue or pen being "it might have been" applies to Pierrefonds. The extravagance of a king with a court, building Chambord and Versailles, is easy to understand, but sightseers have been the only ones within Pierrefonds' walls. Gardeners were stripping and clipping the ivy as it sought to mantle the bare walls whose sharp outlines made us think of Corot who used to paint before dawn. He would throw down his brushes as the light came clear. "You can see everything now—nothing is left!"

The one view of beauty of Pierrefonds we had looking back at its distant spires, its antique (?) towers, as we climbed a hill to the northwest toward Compiègne. Distance lent to the scene and it massed impressively above a little pond in the hollow.

Our road, not a main-traveled one, was marked in heavy green on the maps, signifying *très pittoresque*. We passed a little village called Vieux Moulin and were among tree-clad slopes flower-covered in brilliant blue and again in yellow. There were cowslips by the roadside and watery glimpses. There were no isolated houses. The forest trees were being harvested. Long rows of prone trees looked like a migration of great snakes in the distance.

Our route soon skirted and entered the forest of Compiègne. Paris is surrounded with these old palace parks and hunting forests, now happily loved and walked in and used by thousands from the city. This forest is sixty miles around and has three hun-

dred paths and roads. The trees were open in a setting of glades; we journeyed through exquisite beech woods for miles and miles. The silvery grey boles rose from emerald green moss. Anemones on the slopes looked like feathery snowflakes. The daffodils, as we went on, stretched in uncountable numbers as far as the eye could see; there were square miles of them without exaggeration. The *rouge-gorge* and the merle were singing overhead.

We were going on through miles of this forest, nearing Compiègne, when we came to the secluded spot where the Armistice was signed. The rails, where the envoy's train had stood on a secretly built track, were set in masonry and a cleared path and circle had been arranged in the woodland. A great flat stone, with a bitter-true inscription, marked the spot. Tragedy and beauty seemed near together there in the now peaceful spring woods. It was a place that will always make men hope the cloud of fear will be taken from over the heads of a people who so love their fair and cherished land.

In Compiègne itself we found a hotel facing the barren, road-set façade of the palace, a royal abode built after the days of cone roofs and after Mansart's domes and high-set slates. Its architect, Gabriel, had to be different; he effaced his roof from sight altogether and topped the palace with a marble balustrade.

An eighth of a mile of palace centred upon a four-

mile vista. The garden façade and terrace were restful where there were the remains of an iron-trellised tunnel Napoleon built to please Marie Louise—to amuse the unamusable, in Talleyrand's phrase.

Late in the afternoon we drove past the tall belfry of the distinguished town hall to seek the agency of our car to have a missing bolt put in the wheel. It was on the busy Paris road broadly built for armies. A little group of which the curé was the centre, were much interested in our American motor. Finally the curé took off his shovel hat and came over to us. "You understand, they are telling me I should have such a car to make my visits. It would be most convenient." He had the look in his eye of a man about to buy. He looked our coupé over and peered here and there and was fascinated with the idea. He had been convinced that he could run it if we could. "I could do more in a day," said this most modern of curés.

In the moonlight, late that night, cavalry defiled along the front of the palace. In the morning we crossed the street to enter the paved yard; not often does one lodge so near a palace. The ceilings were still pierced with shells. There were many scorched spots where small blazes had been put out, for Compiègne had been under fire.

The whole palace had an air of superfluity. There was a room of miniature furniture where Eugénie's beloved Prince Imperial had been a child,

a rich revel of upholstery. The library of both Napoleons looked a little as if it had once had occupants, otherwise all was stiff and lifeless.

The town was ever a place of finalities. Here Jeanne d'Arc, cut off from her soldiers, driven in a corner, was captured. They put her in prison in a round tower still down by the river. The Bishop of Beauvais, a sort of human tiger, demanded her because the capture was in his diocese. In those confused days, he was of the English party and paid ten thousand livres to get her in his possession so that she might be tried for sorcery in a court where he should preside.

Our path lay directly west to Beauvais and we left Compiègne under Jeanne's tower over a temporary bridge dependent on poles tied sketchily together. We saw a mother pushing her baby in a tip-cart with rakes and a hoe, going out to her garden patch; and a man planting in his dooryard with a little toddler of two, stamping in the seeds.

The town again merged into wheat fields, rolling over the gentle hills, broken by not one ditch or fence or farmhouse. All living was in small villages far apart, from which all went out to work in the fields. We saw plowing, harrowing and sowing going on in one big field with eight men and many oxen. It was the metayage system of land tenure in action, somewhat like our plan of "on shares." All day we were in the wheat fields.

France makes a desperate effort to raise enough for her entire population of confirmed bread-eaters, for few potatoes or cereals other than wheat are used in France and she dreads economic dependence on imports.

It was curiously a day without water views. We saw some wooded hills and banks but crossed no streams after Compiègne. There were fields, straw stacks and little stony-paved villages often ruinous through great age, a high church roof of mellow tiles and houses of brick and timbers, gathered close to its shadow. Clermont was the only busy place we passed until we came into Beauvais, an old town of individuality.

Up streets so narrow that the word alleys expresses their width, we found gateways into fine houses and beautiful gardens, with trellised fruit and birds singing. The street names delighted us: St. Pantaleon, Turnspit and Philip-le-beau Manoir.

The famed Beauvais tapestry was still being made, very domestically in rooms more like those of a large dwelling than a national manufactory. Twelve workmen faced the light, ingeniously watching their design in a mirror, threading their colors into the warp of the tapestry, flat in front of them, a work incredibly slow and incredibly fine. A whole bevy of young apprentice-pupils were putting on their white smocks and sitting down to instructed work, the Beauvais tapestry workers of the future.

Beauvais' high cathedral bulwarked with buttresses without was shaped like a capital T, for only the choir and transepts survive. We entered a glorious portal and walked under the continuous wall of the two transepts. A Good Friday service was going solemnly on. Murmurous chanting rose from the choir to soar in vibrancy far aloft. Beauvais makes those within its gates look up and up to the loftiest vaulting ever raised by man. In sublimity its thirteenth-century columns soared far, far above us, so that the ridge of the vaulting was two hundred feet above the chanting canons in their stalls. The windows were so long, so great, between the high columns they seemed glass walls, making a choir built of soft colored light barely upheld in silvery stone, rising so far overhead that only sky seemed to belong that high. Once a tower was raised over the crossing of choir and transept where we stood. Its five hundred feet of height crashed to earth after two centuries.

A spirited place Beauvais must have been. Over in the Hôtel de Ville we saw a guidon now dark and faded, the banner young Jeanne Hachette, a gentle girl stirred to sudden valor, flew out from the walls to seize from the attacking Burgundians. The men of Beauvais carry that banner to this day in her annual procession in June and Louis XI came to honor her for her brave deed.

There was a small and rather unimportant *affiche*

stuck among others on the wall at the Hôtel de Ville. It said "Château de Guise à vendre" and went on to tell that all the houses in the village were to be sold with it, the house of the Vve. this and Mlle. that. This ancient stronghold of the Guise was owned by the state, village and all!—a most curious comment on land tenure. The *affiche* said the donjon had been damaged in the last war but the walls were sound. Ten thousand francs down money was named. We felt like staying to see the auction of the château of Balafrè and Marie Stuart's forbears under the hammer. Valois and Guise were both of this day's countryside.

We went on through Normandy on a southwest route, dipping back toward Paris a little, for Gisors. Some of the hillsides were rectangles of different plowings and sowings like patchwork, for great square miles. The crop of pine wood had been harvested and stacked like slender but giant asparagus. The green tops lay like windrows up the slopes as grass is laid low by the scythe. All this part of Normandy, this land of little villages and great fields, is the land of the *nu-pieds,* the barefooted, who suffered terribly before the Revolution, under the *gabelle,* a tax laid after all had been gathered that could. It compelled each peasant to pay a salt tax, whether he used the salt or not and even if he had no food on which to put it. Their sorrows form the reverse of the picture, from the luxurious life of the

château-dwellers. These peasants ate nettles to live —the nettles that still lurk in their ditches.

Footpaths, in distinction from roads, little rights of way, turned up the hills or down to mossy hamlets, as in England. We moved along the pleasant road passing villages and valleys, a caravan or two, and recurring brick cells set by the hedge for road-menders, each with a door and a tile chimney. There were semicircular broom sweeps on the road one beyond another for miles, when we would come upon the road-mender sweeping, sweeping, with long motions of his birch broom like the swing of a scythe, smoothing the road with loose morsels.

We looked ahead and saw Gisors, one of those places to which Anne Warner's hero "Uncle John" wanted to go to hear how they pronounced it! In a bare, broad-streeted town of saffron stone, at the summit of the rising street, sat supreme a fortress built by Henry II Plantagenet in an effort to hold Normandy. Town-owned now, its ramparts were fringed by campers and fair-makers, with tethered donkeys. All were busy this noontime, sizzling, cooking, eating out-of-doors. The great twelfth-century walls overhead swung in a great circle, bestudded with a dozen round towers that pictorially enclosed a quiet, secluded park with women knitting, and men holding canes in the sunshine. In the centre of the park rose an abrupt mound, a truncated cone, on which perched in secure inaccessibility an

inner decagonal castle. It curiously resembled Rougemont Castle in Exeter, and was built by the same king.

We entered the little valley of a river called the Epte and followed it to the Seine. Very near us on a bluff, small houses huddled around a ruin as if they had been built of the débris. It was the nest of the "lordly house of old St. Clair," before the days of Roslyn in Scotland and centuries before Arthur St. Clair, a son of that house, knew defeat under American arms and earned Washington's chagrin.

The short, bright green of young wheat in the early spring was again about us. A closed manor with a huge-treed park, a stone mill with a dripping wheel, were by our road, as we rounded under a high, grazed hillside set with gorse and bracken, into Giverney, beloved for its rustic beauty, the home of Monet and Macmonnies and many others of fame.

Giverney lay close and long under the pastured hill and faced a wide river meadow and banks rising steeply on the other side. The meadow called the *prairie* hid the Seine which the Epte joined in the green levels of bottom land. Green lush banks followed a mill sluice and there was a tranquil little railroad. The mill stream spread out to form Monet's water-view where his water lilies grow.

Pollarded willows with knotty heads were near the water. There were old stone and stucco houses

with soft-colored tile roofs, in gardens, on two long roads and by-lanes, under the bank. Every house of Giverney seemed to have a skylight put into some of its roofs. The day was spring-like enough to sit outdoors on the terrace at the inn and enjoy the simple rural beauty. As we passed Monet's house, long, rambling and raspberry colored with patina-green blinds, we saw his garden of an acre or more in front of the house, path after path bordered by cushiony masses of mauve flowers and next them yellow jonquils. Iris was budding and the long arched tunnel of roses to the house door was leafing out. No one was there and as garden lovers we reveled in his colors and planting, from our seats in the car. Then we looked on the other side of the road to a water-garden and the *prairie* with haystacks in the distance. There sat Monet! the adventurous colorist of the '80's, an old bearded man now, "taking the sun" by stone steps into his lily pool and chuckling at our enthusiasm over his garden.

One after another, thatched roof villages on our road had a duck-pond scooped out and edged up. Fire is a terrible menace in thatched villages and the pond is for bucket brigades. Never a duck-pond in a tiled village. It is not permitted to build a thatched house or renew an entire roof, but half a roof at a time counts as a patch, and so the roofs endure.

We were scarcely away from Giverney before we

came into Vernon, a long street with a heavy tower on its sidewalk. It is the source of the name we use in Mount Vernon, a place of a thousand or so, river-set by the Seine, with a few old houses nodding out at each other, and with the forest of Vernon beyond on the river. From here the Vernons took their name, in the French lord-of-the-manor way, and then went to England. Of this Norman blood came Admiral Vernon with whom Lawrence Washington sailed to Carthagena. He named his home on the Potomac in his Admiral's honor.

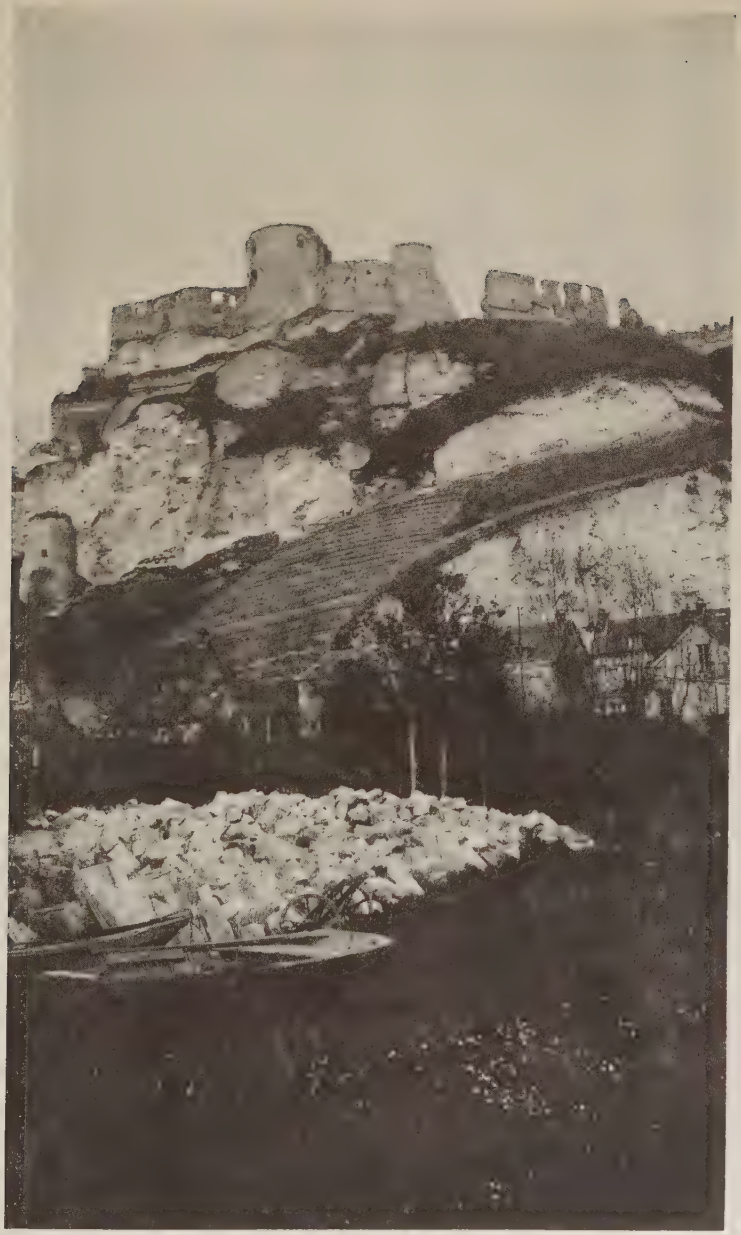
In the open Seine valley the opposite hills drew close to each other and at that point against the sky a bold rugged castle showed, the famous Château Gaillard built by Richard Cœur de Lion to command the Seine and defend Normandy from France —the "lively" fortress of Richard's daring.

As we neared we saw it was on a great hill separated from the line of Seine-side cliffs by a dip of land, so that Château Gaillard, with its walls and ramparts, its towers and dungeons, was safe on all sides from easy approach. The villages of Les Andelys are at its feet. A bridge here crosses the Seine where of old there was a famous ferry, pictured by Turner. From this old ferry site the château of centuries past rises superbly. The ruined tower and walls with holes like hollow eye-sockets overhung the white stone cliff; a terraced field and one or two houses adhered to the low part of the

cliff, but the Seine was at its very feet. Terrible things have happened here in the centuries long gone by; the non-combatants and the hounds were turned out of the fortress to conserve food and the besiegers would not let them pass. They sought minnows and ate the hounds and slowly perished on this rocky hillside, finding no mercy in friend or foe, before or behind them.

Petit Andely is one of the fairest spots we had come to, a village of riverside gardens, with the river, the cliffs, and Château Gaillard in sight. Though the spring days had now lengthened our running time very much, evening was near and we sought to stay in a garden-terraced, riverside inn. They were in a bustle of preparation and had only one room left. We went on to another. They had none. We went on to Grand Andely, the other village of Les Andelys, also under Gaillard's shadow. It was Saturday afternoon and the morrow was Easter. Half England seemed to be over on a holiday. The hotels were full. Charabancs were disgorging excursionists to view the glories of Les Andelys, with eight minutes allowed before the return to Rouen. We asked the motor-driver how many he had aboard, for like the Trojan horse, it had a multitude within. "Fifty-seven," he answered.

We returned at high speed. The one room was filled. This was our first experience on the whole journey of finding hotels full. We had already had



Château Gaillard on the Seine

The Ten-sided Fortress of Gisors

The Gothic Glories of Rouen

a long day, but we studied the road map, filled the tank and took the great hill ahead over the heights to Rouen, forty kilometres on, climbing a height as high as Gaillard with many a hairpin turn to accomplish the sudden rise. On the summit was a deserted moor with low beds of gorse and bracken. The Seine was twisting on far below under abrupt cliffs or *falaises* of white chalk.

The final descent to Rouen was one long dive down from the heights into the valley, with the old Norman capital spread at our feet. A notable hill of the journey, Flaubert living by the waterside, said of its view: "Seen thus from above the whole landscape seemed immovable as a picture, the anchored ships were massed in one corner, the river curved round the foot to green hills, and the isles oblique in shape, lay on the water, like large motionless black fish."

Rouen seemed very commercial in our entrance by this hill and its river-front was a mixture of American oil enterprise and old café-sitting life. We spent not a moment in loitering for we could see tourists were on every street and sidewalk chair. We drew up at a hotel where we could claim we "always stayed there!" They had a memory of us. The hotel was full but they would find quarters for us in another. *Complet* is a discouraging word. They sent a bell-boy with us and telephoned to another hotel. The streets were narrow and pedes-

trians flowed across from curb to curb. Many were of the nationality that would insist that they were between kerb and kerb! We went through an arch under a glorious blue and gold town-clock and backed and filled and waited for distrait hotels to say they too were *complet.* The English excursion was in possession. It began to look serious but the bell-boy stayed on the running-board, tooting the horn in his desire to help. Finally we located a medieval, musty lodgement, with rooms paneled in bolection molding, with old green glass and a view upon a courtyard, set about with ancient timber gables and leaded glass. The very sort of an inn that figured in the Sentimental Journey, it had the unaired fustiness of disuse since Sterne's day.

The garage was another problem. Two near-by garages were small and full. Far down the quay we found a perfect place, but a cab ride from our sleeping quarters.

Discomfort was forgotten at dinner for we went to a famous restaurant near the cathedral where a great salmon many feet long was ready for those who ate *maigre* and where the *maitre d'hotel* presided at a silver duck-press with two waiters to pull the levers—it always takes a flurry of servants to do things here,—and the master did prestidigitations on a blazer.

CHAPTER XXV

THE END OF OUR RUN

EASTER morning in Rouen—we breakfasted on the broad quay beside the Seine where hundreds of gaily painted cane chairs were set at little tables for the crowd that would be sitting having *consommations* all day long. It seemed best to live in our car the rest of the day and get on to Lisieux to sleep. To that end we telephoned ahead for rooms and put our bags in place early. Commercial as Rouen was, it had a curious effect of being very full of beauties, all very near together. We were always in the shadow of a famous building, or a church front, or a superb timber façade towered above us or we were on the street of the Palais de Justice with its grey-black courtyard of romantic Gothic windows where the very stone seemed to curl and twine in exuberant openwork gables.

The cathedral in the warm spring morning loomed high against the sky in lacy intricacies of stone blackened by time, with all the upper and projecting parts white from the action of rain and sun.

St.-Ouen, the fourteenth-century masterpiece, vast above our heads, was full. Far, far down the long slim nave, converging in slender-arched perspective, antiphonal voices of men answered one to the other. Suddenly from over our heads the great organ let out a jubilant peal, a great blast of sound. The altar was ablaze with candle-light, acolytes with tall tapers flitted after golden chasubled backs, like the distant picture of a scene five centuries back.

Louis Hourticq, the critic, tells that in the eighteenth century, Rouen was considered the ugliest town in France! for the very reason that now makes us consider it picturesque—for, "now we are all antiquarians!"

Rouen has an air of a capital in its proud buildings, an upstanding Norman air. In English hands for many centuries, as when Jeanne d'Arc was burned alive, the Norman looks at that in his own way. He thinks of England as long in Norman hands and looks upon history as an affair of an English party or a French party, which, as Norman, he favored in turn.

Rouen has the last bridge over the Seine and it behooved us as motorists to get on the side of the river we wished to be. We crossed and were soon out in a green and meadowy country under wooded hills, traveling southwest toward Lisieux. So confusing was the Seine in its convolutions, that we

journeyed southwest, but downstream with the river toward the sea!

At a waterside inn at La Bouille twenty people loiteringly ate their Easter dejeuner in the sun. In great calm they looked across the Seine at lines of tall poplars reflected in the river and at the vivid scarlet and white steamboat moored at the wharf.

There was a rapidly rising hill to take us up to the forest heights. Under the trees, near the highroad, was a woodland restaurant, and we sat under the blue sky in the Normandy woods and tapped on the rustic table to summon the distant waiter who came on a long-striding run.

Thatched houses, little barns and haystacks were scattered about in the orchards and behind green hedges. This was a great change of landscape from the close-set, roadside village houses of France to the south. These Norman cottages were of dark timber, filled in with yellow mud or with mellow brick. Each surfacing bit of sunshiny wall between window and door, between corner and window, and under the gable end, was set with an old espaliered apple tree or pear tree, framed strongly to the wall in a veritable herringbone of lateral branches. Each of these was betwigged in hundreds of starry blossoms. It was as if the walls were burgeoning forth in pink and white. Each garden-set cottage as we came to it, on the open village streets, seemed lovelier than the one before.

By the roadsides, the violets and primroses decked the banks' green side. The cuckoos called slowly and deliberately like the clocks of childhood days. It was twelve o'clock all day long!

Lisieux was a country town of old well-preserved timbered houses in perfect revels of cross-setting, with tiled and tilted gables and outgrowths upon the roofs. Quiet, old and well cared for, antique façades began at a clean pavement, with bright shops, then a row of blossoming window-boxes and shining windows, then overhanging stories, with carved salamanders and grotesques, then more dark criss-crossed oak, more leaded windows and adorable gables. The streets seemed curiously like the black-and-white timbered towns in England. The very faces of the people had the strong features, fine noses, the good foreheads that are the type of the governing class in England. We saw a dozen Gladstones in smocks in this part of Normandy.

At the small town hall, recessed very quietly on a courtyard, there was something going on and much going out and in. Two girls came out, dressed in veritable old costumes of panniered skirts, small bodices, adorable caps, and went off in a carriage. An old lady stopped to say we should go in, we should be most welcome. We found all the fair demoiselles of Lisieux wearing their great-grandmothers' grandeur, their brocades, their lace, their caps three feet high. It was a bevy of youth and

beauty—an opinion the circle of attendant young men seemed to second.

The hotel courtyard was overflowing with the cars of Easter *voyageurs*. Dinner took two hours to distribute in the packed dining-room. We had joy in watching—not the first time!—a Frenchman gesticulate as he telephoned. As both earpiece and receiver are one in France, it left a hand free for vehement, vigorous action. He accompanied it by many head movements, and changing of feet as well. No wonder the French think all Americans have impassive countenances. The liveliest of us in an emotional crisis could not rival this man telling his brother he would arrive at ten.

In the morning when the packed courtyard thinned, we backed out of the coach-shed and were away from pleasant Lisieux out into a springtime countryside, between hedges of thorn breaking into blossoms. There were old hawthorns matted with ivy and none so thick but what we could see the verdant meadows and the rolling high hills between the greenery, as we aimed forty-five kilometres southwest toward Falaise. At one green summit we stopped to look across the valley of the Dives, a sinuous meadow-set river in a lush, green valley. Woodland was still there. It was the very place where trees were felled to build the Norman fleet. It all lay within rounded grassy hills, and yet at one end of that little tranquil stream, William the Con-

queror was held in a humble mother's arms and from the other he sailed to conquer England—a long advance for a quiet meadow stream to register.

Falaise lay ahead of us on a wide "national road," on a high site, above steep cliffs, as its name implies. The deep ravines held trees and gurgling stream, woodsy and wild. The little town sat atop, its heart a tile-roofed mass, surrounded by a clustering belt of slate roofs marking growth since the walls were pulled down. We dipped into the ravine and rose into the high town, parking the car under the hoof of the bronze horse on which an heroic "*Guillaume le Conquerant*" sat in chain armor. A great Norman on the saddle of a great Norman horse—it was the embodied spirit of 1066!

William was born here in Falaise and we went along the cliffside to his father's castle, a stronghold, perched above the little river. Tall "Talbot's Tower" overhung the deep, rocky-walled ravine, lovely in the delicate coloring of spring. The older part of the castle, Robert-le-Diable's stronghold, was roofless but could be walked in, on wall-clinging paths around its fortress rooms.

We looked out the window; five hundred feet below lay a little cluster of cottages in the depth of the ravine. One, two—we counted thirty-one circles in the ground. They were tanners' pits, where they have been for nine hundred years. No survival in all France spoke of the fixity of life, of unchang-

ing custom as did these tan pits far below the castle wall, where Arlette, the tanner's daughter, lived and washed at the stream-side. The Conqueror's father looked down at her from the very window opening where we stood, perhaps on just such a spring day with the cuckoos calling in the woods. Though William raged all his life at the sight of a hide hung out to deride him, yet here for the centuries where he was born the tanners have gone on.

When William of Normandy married Matilda before he earned his rumbling title of *" Conquerant,"* there had not been a Duchess of Normandy for fifty years, since his grandmother's day. She found all men, but told them to go and fetch their wives and their mothers and she had a court formed in a month.

The sun was warm, the meadows green, primroses and cowslips were all about us as we set out for Caen. A brookside, yellow with marsh marigolds and shaded by pussy-willows fuzzy with pollen, had great trees with roots gnarling down in the water. We chose a spot remote and flowery and sat beside the bank to eat a cherry tart and brioche and Camembert among the primroses. Blue-smocked carters, singing as they walked, saluted as they passed.

Much of the way was double set with elms. There were many speeders on the road in small cars. Perhaps two cars were within sight at one time, which is a crowded road in France! Some of the cars were large and important looking, bound to Deau-

ville or back to Paris. Some were emotional in their motoring with open mufflers, noisy horns, leather casques for their heads and very large-sized goggles for themselves and for their dogs!

We passed a shepherd with a well-held-together flock placidly making the roadside a lawn. Far at our left one of the famous quarries of Caen stone could be seen, with freight cars on which were creamy blocks of stone half the size of a room. Out of these quarries of Caen went most of the Gothic cathedral material of northern France and southern England, a pastoral scene to have yielded so much beauty from beneath the grass.

The thoroughfare into Caen was the one on which Charlotte Corday set out with her firm purpose for Paris. Our telegram had secured the last rooms, the kind Stevenson tells of: "On the sixth floor, although they make it out the fourth by calling one the entresol and another nothing at all." And Tom Moore in the same location called his: "The first in descending from heaven!" But we were glad of our mansarts. Easter Monday is a supreme playtime, and Normandy hotels were packed with young university men and family groups from England, as well as Parisians.

Caen has always seemed William the Conqueror's city because his Abbaye aux Hommes is at one end of the town and Matilda's Abbaye aux Dames at the other. In death they were divided, for he slept

in his great church and she in hers. Once upon a time William pulled Matilda by the hair from the castle in Caen to where her Abbaye sits. He was contrite and compensated handsomely by letting Matilda build her Abbaye to her limit of desire. In driving it did not seem far, though Matilda must have found it long.

These Abbayes were built before the conquest though one thinks of them as the result of great aggressions. Fortunate in standing in the open Matilda's is practically as she left it, with two great square towers over round-arched portals and another tower at the crossing of the transepts. The steeples have been lost in the centuries, but the towers are beautiful still. The interior was round-arched and had open galleries on top of the aisles as if for processions of the cloistered. Cicely, the founder's daughter, was Abbess or "Madame of Caen," the old title that always went with the Abbaye. In the crypt small lance windows set in a semicircle let the sunshine fall like a sun-dial on the tomb of Matilda, the founder.

William built at the other end of town. On the way we passed a seed market where supplies for planting were being bought, but there was a vast selling array of butter in baskets as well. A young man with a great clatter chopped apart a heavy crate and began crying out and pulling forth straw and Breton dishes. A circle of eager faces was round

him in a moment. The ring was three deep at once. He put a great butter bowl on the ground and threw in a lot of money, in paper francs and coppers, for change.

He dragged out plates and platters, cups and bowls. "How much am I bid?" he said but he kept up a hullaballoo of how fine a fish would look on this—Madame! how your table would look with that! La! the fine salad bowl—and hurled them far aloft in the air, juggling them as they descended. The bids came fast, the crowd strained in fear. "Five sous!" "Six!" one voice after another cried. With incredible swiftness he poked the plates into the hands of the bidder and nimbly kept the rest in the air. There was one more plate than bid. It crashed on the stones and the crowd groaned. He gathered his money and threw the bills—five cents was a bill, of course—in the open bowl. Again the plates whirled up—again the bids flew fast. If the bid was not high enough he let the ware crash and then scrunched around on the fragments while his taunts and sallies kept all excited. He piled up four plates, four cups, a platter, a bowl, extolling and adding something to the imaginary table setting. He demanded fifteen francs and chose an old white-coifed farmer's wife who wanted them most. He whirled like a dervish and set them at her feet and urged her to take them. No? He threw francs out of the bowl on them. Would she take them now?

Now? Now? Reducing the price by putting money on the purchase was so puzzling that the circle was in a frenzy. They were offered money and dishes at one swift chance.

His entire crate was emptied in twenty minutes and he was gone. The broken crate, the torn straw and the broken inducements alone remained on the cobblestones. This salesmanship was in the shadow of the Abbaye aux Hommes built before the Norman Conquest of England!

Breathless and with two Breton plates on the seat, we went on to enter the one gap in the houses by which the Abbaye is attained. Solemn and grim was the old façade with great, plain, steepled towers, that are landmarks for Caen far over the land, but curiously difficult to see in Caen.

Guillaume le Conquerant—as a Norman rolls out his name with a vanquishing sound, was buried under his central tower. First the Huguenots had him out, the Revolution next, but tradition avers one leg bone was retrieved for sepulture again.

Our distance to Cherbourg was just one hundred and twenty kilometres. We said to each other if anything should happen, we now could be towed to the boat! We had a day to spare and decided to visit Deauville and Trouville from Caen, and then go on to Cherbourg.

In the bright spring air we took the road out of Caen through a street with a modern rolling mill and

bare cinder-covered land. In five kilometres we were in green fields and high-set hedgerows with thorn blossoms like white mist. It was a sinuous, narrow road, with more motors, of the moneyed class, than we had seen anywhere else on our route. There were the inevitable two-wheeled carts on the road, too. These, with many hidden bends, made it of small wonder the road was marked dangerous. It deserved to be marked beautiful, too. There were double lines of trees on both sides and white mansions, tree-set in parks and gardens. One after another had pillared gateways, or bristling grille or roofs of high-set slate.

The motors of Easter sea-visitors in gay Paris clothes passed us running up the devious hill that we were descending. We were entering a valley of apple blossoms, buried in hills that were high and banks that were green and trees that were bowery. Thus we came into Dives and crossed its brimming little flood on a low-set bridge. The river mouth bristled with iron mills but not widespread and the blue sea was beyond. Almost at once we were at the Inn of *Guillaume le Conquerant,* an inn superlative in France. It sat close by the road and had rather a dull face, but we entered a garage yard set with flowers. Through an oak gate was an enchanting courtyard of gables and galleries, of wallflowers in bronzy masses, of nooks and fountains and little black oak staircases mounting to romantic quarters. Oak

The Abbey of Caen Built by the Wife of William the Conqueror

Norman Cottages Near Lisieux

Cottages Espaliered in Fruit Trees

The Strand at Deauville

corridors led to Mme. de Sévigné's room and Louis XIII's and Dumas', all under mossy tiles and within black-and-white timber walls. We looked down on wistaria garlands and flower-set window boxes, on Gloire de Dijon roses and graveled paths.

Then we went to the kitchen, for that was the next thing to do. It was a collector's kitchen filled with beautiful utensils. There is not such another kitchen. A wood fire blazed; the spits turned with golden brown chickens on them; the beams hung with old Delft and with polished brass; the walls were of old blue tiles and waxed black oak. There stood the white-clad chef, ready to do marvels. There was the master of the inn, ready to talk of sole fresh out of the sea, of asparagus coaxed ahead of time. As he talked, if we acceded, the cook seized a grille or a saucepan of burnished copper to create on the moment. The rhapsody of suggestion became a reality set before us at a nooked table. We chose sunshine and roses overhead, in the open air, but there were Louis Quinze salons half-open and half-closed—something for all tastes.

They brought Normandy butter with a flavor not to be forgotten and cream of depth, in a little bowl with a ladle, a luxury of exquisitely simple things.

We might have thought there were too many antiques garnered into the courtyard, but group after group of motorists from Deauville and Paris came in and settled into the scene. Church statues

and those of kings, saints and sinners, the clipped box and the southern-wood, the colorful flowers, the quiet walls—all became a setting for groups at dejeuner.

We made this a farewell celebration of our journey. It epitomized France. This fifteenth-century inn at Dives, set at the dramatically historical spot where the Conqueror gathered his fleet and sailed to his Conquest, from the river in whose upper waters his humble mother beat her washing.

After our coffee we went on by the open sea, the blue, the fresh, the ever free. The road rose on a high cliff where little farmhouses were romantically thatched and the sheep and cows grazed pictorially in fields with superb views of the Channel. The pink orchards and wall-espaliered fruit made it look like an ethereal land. There was a view of a deep inland valley with a white village smothered in apple blossoms.

We descended a very long hill into Deauville and ran along the sea past stiff brick villas, gardens, great casinos and restaurants. It was a seashore scene of permanent buildings. There were carefully clipped hedges enclosing areas of sea sand. A river with two quays had sailboats beating out to sea. The waves were coming in on the sands very tranquilly and a few chairs and their occupants were on the shore. Across the little river the wooded, villa-set banks of Trouville, crowned with trees to its summit, rose in orderly green-and-white.

We returned through the bowery valley of fine living, into which we had looked from the heights, and found the Dives a little river when we came to it, for the tide had gone out.

In the morning we left Caen realizing that the only dweller in any of the old mellow houses, known to the world since the ten hundreds, was Beau Brummel. Richard Mansfield in the part came to mind, starving in his garret but standing in his faded, carefully buttoned coat, saying spectrally of his life in Caen: "I spend my time between London and Paris!"

We met a thrilled curé riding a new motor-cycle with his beaver hat jammed down on his head and his black gown flying, on the thoroughfare to Cherbourg, past the Abbaye aux Hommes. We took time to make a circle in front of its solemn paired towers and were soon in the open country of pastures and views. We passed manors the size of the White House, with long avenues of trees leading back, and a village. Remarking its two-story houses we looked for its name. It was called "Bretteville-l'Orgueleuse," Bretteville the Haughty! Norman spirit showed in that name!

In less than thirty kilometres we were in the orderly stone streets of Bayeux, on the quiet pavements where old men were digging the grass from between the stones so that none might say grass grew in the street, circling the old Liberty tree, behind the cathe-

dral, planted in the first gentle days of the Revolution. Then we went in the twelfth-century cathedral, a silvery stone interior softened by light from pale green glass so that its restful color remained with us. With its glorious Norman columns, Bayeux's cathedral, the last we should be entering on the route, seemed a model of what a cathedral should be: preserved, orderly, respected and not visibly restored. Some old canons were holding a service beyond the grille, their shoulders covered in ermine tippets. They were tottering with age but dignified; their sonorous voices had long filled the old arches with their chants but were like faint echoes now.

Though we were going on to Cherbourg that afternoon, there was plenty of time to see the famous Bayeux tapestry kept across from the side of the cathedral. It was not a tapestry in an exact sense, but was an outline stitch series of fifty-eight scenes from William the Conqueror's life, all on one seventy-yard strip of linen, without seam or join. It has always been attributed to Matilda and her ladies, and even the most captious think it contemporaneous. Ingeniously shown under glass around two sides of a long, standing frame, every figure was outlined in colored wools. Clothing, chain armor and horses were expressed in stitches giving a surface. The scenes were vivid and easily understood. Hints as to the pictured scene followed

as a running text in easy Latin. Modern moving pictures might take a suggestion from 1066, for the words and picture were offered together.

The centuries have been very gentle with the Bayeux tapestry; it is clear and complete. We saw warriors on horseback engulfed in the sands at Mont St. Michel and understood the situation exactly! The ships were being built in the Dives for the embarkation for England. The very fear of the horses in the boats was expressed. There was no effort made to give number. But they landed at Pevensey; they dined well; they fought the great fight and Harold died. Here the embroidered scene ends. As a document of costume it has no equal and fascinated us because it seemed in so many ways so very modern. The English all had tight moustaches—they have them to-day. The Normans were all clean-shaven. And this naive needlework from women's fingers, on handspun flax, is all that has survived the centuries to tell us how these people looked.

After folding away our thirty-second French road map we were again on the same one on which we had started on our first October morning to follow the roads of France, seven months before. We could still decipher new interpretations from some of their dots and tails at this last day! We had thirty-five sabot nails as trophies from the tires, but a generous three-quarters of them represented finds before punctures. We had not once run out of *essence*

nor had we ever had difficulty in finding a place to buy it or been compelled to carry *bidons* with us for emergency. We had not been obliged to change a tire alone. The problem of oil had been met by buying a sealed can, and securing another before it was empty. In all the journey, the garagistes had been courteous and desirous to help, though sometimes a little slow and methodical with a method that was their own. No one took any advantage of us, we felt, on all the journey, and only one tried to.

Hotel living has been much simplified in France by the very general custom of adding ten per cent. to the bill for service. No longer is there the long row of servants lined up to be feed and departure is thus much pleasanter. At some conservative places, Nantes for instance, the old method prevailed and there was a memorable line: the chambermaid, the valet de chambre, the waiter, the head-waiter—we refused to meet his eye—the boots, the portier, the elevator boy and two garagemen, each with a smile, a farewell and an extended palm!

As our journey through France neared its end, we were convinced the statement that all educated Frenchmen speak English is a pleasant fiction. In our experience, those of the class of professors, army officers, officials, university graduates and their families, young and old, are linguistically timid. They claim to read English but stand in awe of pronouncing a single word and lack the initiative to

try. I remember an infantry captain at whose home we had dined. He and his wife stood at their door to wave adieus. He braced himself for a farewell in English and bravely said: "Bye-bye!"

This last day our inland road past Bayeux paralleled the sea but with no sign of its proximity. We were in a dairy country that offered an epicurean product of Camembert cheese and renowned butter. There were a few coöperative dairies and then a Louis XII château and among others, the village of Longueville, which brought to mind the intriguing duchesse of that name. Some of the farms, for in a dairy country the workers live on farms and not in village groups, were ablaze in scarlet brilliance with the espaliered blossoms of the flowering quince trained as a vine.

Ahead on the Vire, a little river, lay Issigny, the home of the heavy crème d'Issigny, that Paris loves; the kind sold and served in little brown earthen jars. We looked forward to it as the probable beauty spot of the day, with lowing kine and bowery thatched cottages. Issigny was bare and grassless; it smelt of fish! But there was a soft haze on the sea and the little river was full of broad-bottomed fishing-boats tied to the wharf.

On the banks of the Vire there lived in the 1600's a man who shouted jolly, carousing songs, that were called *Vaux de Vire,* so popular that many sang them. Years went on, *Vaux de Vire* slowly changed

to *Vau-de-ville,* a pastoral origin in this cream-famous land.

The road was straight to Cherbourg. We could well believe some Napoleon drew a line for it and said: "There!" Primroses faced us from the grassy roadsides. We saw beehives in the gardens, thatched and with rain-shedding bonnets. Far on a hill to the west was Brix, hill-set against the sky, from whence the Bruce went to valorous deeds and the Scottish throne. Mile after mile the upland pastures followed our route. The cottage walls were fair with fruit blossoms; the wide road stretched ahead.

In shabby Valognes, we crossed the route of our first day on our last, and had tea in the sunny window where we had had our first luncheon on the route. The cottages still burgeoned forth in pink beauty. Cowslips were nodding their slender yellow heads in all the meadows. Apple-cheeked old men in blue smocks and fringed white whiskers passed us on the road.

We were nearing the sea on the high headlands over Cherbourg. Yellow gorse growing where the pastures ended at the deep ravines' edges, formed laps of strong yellow color, outlining the ravines with miles of waxy yellow against the green of young grass. Pink camellias blossomed in a sheltered garden.

We descended into Cherbourg, down to the sea

and its ships, on a tremendous hill from the high frowning fortifications defending the harbor, on a road cut straight to the water, and turned into the gravel-pathed garden we had left seven months before.

There was time that afternoon to report at the steamship office and hand our papers, the registration cards and quarterly tax receipts, to the steamship agent, who obtained the French customs' release necessary for embarkation.

Next day, at an appointed time when the tide was low we drove the car up two gangways, side by side, onto the tender and even maneuvered it into position at the prow. A taxi-driver, watching from the road, thriftily bethought himself to borrow a bucket and came in haste to conserve the *essence* emptied from the tank. So happy was he over this treasure-trove that we had to ride over to the hotel with him on our own gasoline!

The steamer came early in the forenoon into the harbor and we went out on the tender with the car submerged by mail-bags.

From the deck we watched the fading shore of France, a land made very dear and intimate to us by this journey under our own guidance of the car on this free, self-chosen route. It was a friendly land we were leaving after 4,000 miles of adventure on highways and byways through its storied land. A hundred happy memories rose as we said:

Touring Through France

"Farewell to thy fountains, farewell to thy shades,
To the song of thy youths, and the dance of thy maids,
To the breath of thy gardens, the hum of thy bees,
And the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees."

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